

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 466 668

RC 023 593

TITLE Tell Us How It Was: Stories of Rural Elders Preserved by Rural Youth.

INSTITUTION Rural School and Community Trust, Washington, DC.; What Kids Can Do, Inc., Providence, RI.

PUB DATE 2002-00-00

NOTE 144p.; Some photographs may not reproduce well.

AVAILABLE FROM Rural School and Community Trust; 1825 K Street, N.W., Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006 (\$20.00). Tel: 202-955-7179; Web site: <http://www.ruraledu.org>.

PUB TYPE Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Active Learning; *Intergenerational Programs; *Interviews; Local History; Older Adults; *Oral History; Rural Education; Secondary Education; Story Telling; *Student Projects

IDENTIFIERS Place Based Education

ABSTRACT

This publication compiles oral histories preserved by rural students around the country and provides teachers with information and resources for developing oral history projects. The first five sections were written by the students and teachers of (1) Anderson Valley Junior/Senior High School, Boonville, California; (2) Edcouch-Elsa High School, Elsa, Texas; (3) Mariposa Middle School, California; (4) Rocky Gap High School, Virginia; and (5) Sand Rock High School, Leesburg, Alabama, and Flambeau School District, Rusk County, Wisconsin. These sections include interview excerpts and complete interviews of community elders by students; teacher descriptions of how students prepared for and conducted the interviews, transcribed and edited their work, prepared the final publications, and carried out self-evaluations; and student reflections on their experiences during the project. Section 6 presents a selection of oral histories in alternate formats--as interview, essay, poetry, and playscript. Appendices provide more detailed descriptions of oral history projects at three schools; 63 resources contained in "Oral and Community History in K-12 Schools: An Annotated Bibliography" (Elisabeth Higgins Null); and contact information for the schools. (SV)

Tell Us How It Was

Stories of Rural Elders Preserved by Rural Youth

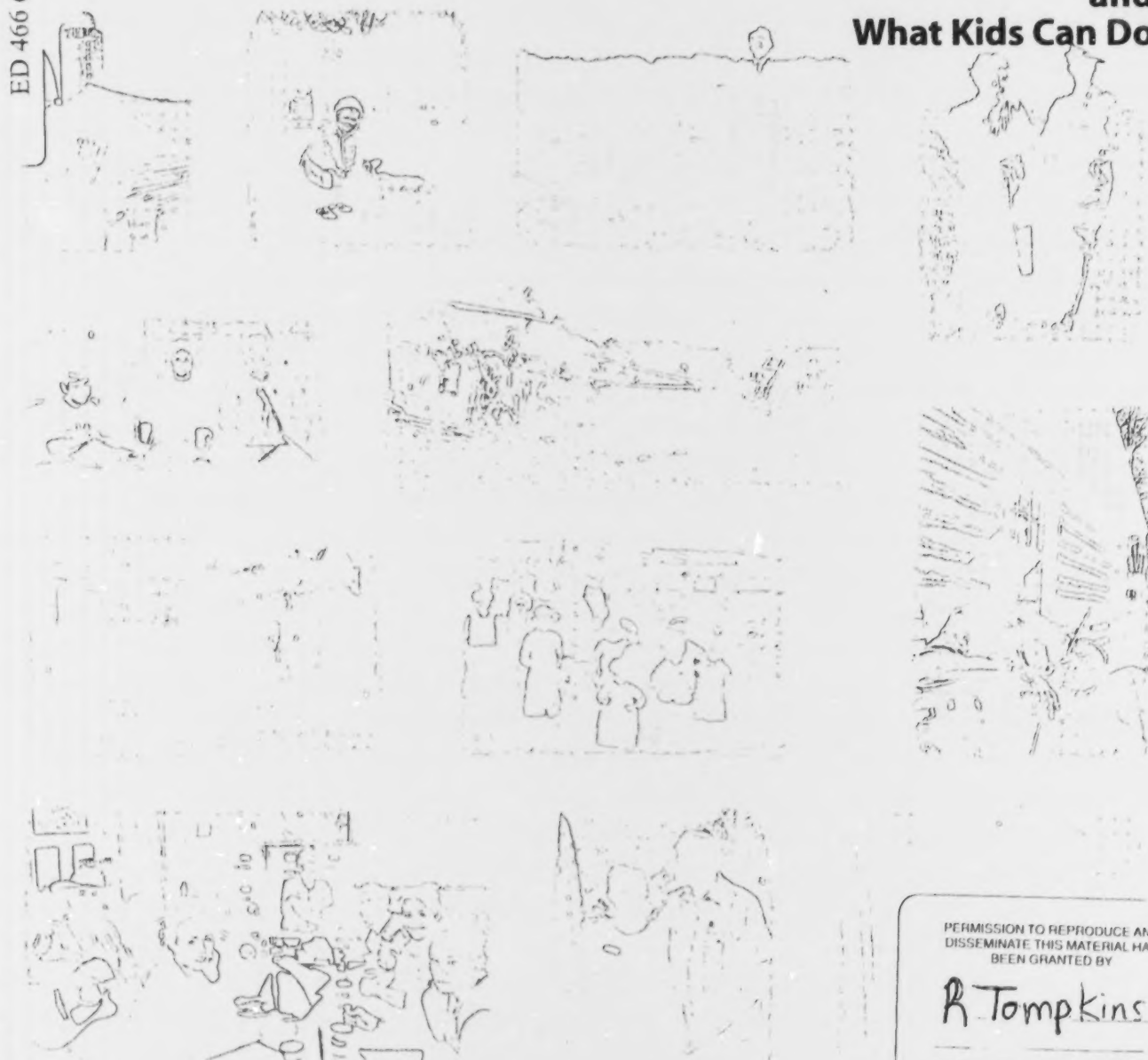
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Tell Us How It Was

**Stories of Rural Elders
Preserved by Rural Youth**

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Resources prepared by:

Llano Grande Center, Elsa, Texas

Rocky Gap High School, Rocky Gap, Virginia

Yampa Valley Legacy Education Init., Steamboat Springs, CO

Introduction

No textbook can rival the power of hearing a vivid story of the past directly from someone who experienced it. "I was there," the elder says—and for a moment we can feel the scrape of the cross-saw, the heft of picking cotton, the fear of facing the battlefield or giving birth in a cabin far from town.

Teachers have realized the potential of oral histories ever since Studs Terkel brought his methods into mainstream history and literature courses with *The Good War* (1972). The last decade has seen an upsurge of classes across the country that have adopted the technique, with students interviewing members of their own communities and retrieving priceless memories in written, audio, and video form. Not only do students learn the history of their region and nation, but they also gain valuable practice in skills of research, questioning, listening, shaping interview material into coherent narrative, and using technology to publish their work for audiences with authentic interest and need. Just as important, they gain exposure to perspectives outside their own, benefiting from relationships with older generations.

This collection expands this tradition. It features remarkable oral histories prepared by middle and high school students in communities stretching from Alabama to northern California, Wisconsin to south Texas—a group of young people separated by geography and culture but linked by the smallness of their communities, most with populations under 2,000. All participate in the Rural School and Community Trust, a national organization dedicated to strengthening the natural ties between school and community, young and old in rural towns nationwide.

With *Tell Us How It Was* come several hopes. One is to showcase and celebrate the outstanding work done by these students and their teachers. Another is to bring into more social studies and language

arts classes the memories and chiseled wisdom of "ordinary folk" at home, at work, and at play. We imagine this collection making its way into student backpacks, a homegrown curriculum produced by students in one place and shared with others elsewhere.

Encouraging teachers and students to try an oral history project of their own is a third goal. To this end, the collection's opening section, featuring the Voices of the Valley project from Anderson Valley, California, offers a close-in view of an oral history project from start to finish. Indeed, each section of *Tell Us How It Was* begins with an introduction that frames the oral histories that follow, coupled with a brief description (presented in a shaded box) of the classroom context that produced the selected work. The appendix also includes documents prepared by project leaders in Elsa, Texas, Rocky Gap, Virginia, and Yampa Valley, Colorado; they offer concrete tips and guidance to teachers and others considering an oral history unit.

To show the variety and flexibility of oral history, the last two sections of the collection reflect a different approach than the four that precede it (though both contain the customary introduction and classroom context). Section V, featuring the work of students from Leesburg, Alabama, and Rusk County, Wisconsin, presents shorter selections from a greater number of elders; in their brevity they emphasize the appeal of the anecdotes, reflections, and memorable turns of phrase at the heart of oral history. The concluding chapter, Section VI, offers a medley of literary forms, from essay to poetry to playscript, to demonstrate the variety of ways that interviews with elders can be presented—as well as their appropriateness for students of all ages.

Tell Us How It Was results from the union of two closely aligned organizations, the first large, the second small. The Rural School and Community

Introduction *continued*

Trust—the source of these remarkable stories—began in 1995 as the Annenberg Rural Challenge and currently supports 700 school-community partnerships in over 30 states. Its advocacy of “place-based learning” connects students with the people, places, and issues closest to them, in the process revitalizing towns and empowering students in some of the nation’s most distressed rural areas. It views young people as a vital force for imagining what’s possible in small town America.

What Kids Can Do (WKCD), launched in the winter of 2001, promotes the value of young people working with teachers and other adults on projects that combine powerful learning with public purpose. It believes deeply in the contributions of young people as citizens and knowledge creators, putting youth voices at the forefront of

all it produces. Preparing an anthology such as this falls squarely within the WKCD mission. WKCD’s writer and researcher Lisa Rowley tackled most of the gathering, selecting, writing, and editing required to bring the project to life.

A final and important note. The stories presented here represent but a fraction of the oral history work currently ongoing in Rural Trust sites nationwide; the unbound format reflects our hope that additional samples can and will be added to the volume over time. The reason is simple. As one high school student said of her school’s oral history course: “Voices of the Valley is definitely a worthwhile project. It’s bridging the gap between youth and elders. It’s the most valuable type of history, because it’s dealing with the real life lessons.”

Barbara Cervone, President
What Kids Can Do, Inc.

Rachel Tompkins, President
Rural School and Community Trust

Winter 2002

SECTION I

Anderson Valley Junior/Senior High School Boonville, California

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All Section I photos courtesy of Mitch Mendosa

From the Editors

According to local legend, one hundred-plus years ago, the young daughter of a prominent San Francisco family arrived in the small northern California town of Boonville. The purpose of her visit was to wait out a pregnancy that had come about, in the words of resident Bobby Glover, "without the benefit of clergy." For the locals, the burning need to gossip ran smack into their desire to spare the feelings of the new arrival. To resolve the conflict, those long-ago farmers and ranchers—who themselves could barely write—invented a special language. To this day, "Boontling" words and phrases can still be heard in the speech of Anderson Valley old-timers.

Life-long Valley resident Donald Pardini offers some examples. "Applehead was your girlfriend...and jennybeeking meant listening to a phone conversation you shouldn't be listening to." Bobby Glover's knowledge of Boontling has put him on television 68 times, including three stints on The Johnny Carson Show.

Newcomers gradually joined old-timers like Bobby and Donald. Otilio Espinoza, for instance, arrived in Anderson Valley from his native Mexico in the late 1960s. Seventeen at the time, he meant to stay for just one summer. But 28 years later Otilio remains, having fallen "in love with the scenery and the climate and all the people around me."

Unlike Otilio, Rob Goodall and his wife moved to Anderson Valley intent on spending the rest of their lives. Called "hippies" by some, "homesteaders" by others, they established gardens and orchards, built their own house, and raised two sons—whom Rob steadfastly maintains aren't "like nature freaks, though."

Rob and Otilio, Donald and Bobby settled in Anderson Valley via different paths, but a common bond unites them. As Rob says of the northern California wilderness they all call home, "We all love this place."

Guided by teacher and North Coast Rural Challenge Network (NCRCN) coordinator Mitch Mendosa, a group of seventh graders published in 1997 the inaugural volume of *Voices of the Valley: Stories of Anderson Valley Elders Collected by Anderson Valley Youth*.

Reading from a local history book (authored by their teacher's uncle) solidified their overall purpose: to collect stories not just for history's sake but to strengthen ties among various groups in their northern California community. Students thus selected their interview choices—from a list of over 100 names gathered by talking to locals—with a careful eye towards broad representation.

They then set up times for "pre-interviews"—informal meetings held without intimidating microphones that allowed students and elders to grow comfortable with each other and explore topics of conversation beyond the original questions. After conducting and taping interviews in pairs—one student technician along with the interviewer—the class transcribed and edited tapes. Students also produced audio tapes and compact discs with technical assistance from adult volunteers.

Throughout the year, the middle schoolers mentored their NCRCN peers in Mendocino and Point Arena, giving regular updates via e-mail and video-conferencing. They later served as advisors to the high school students who produced *Voices of the Valley, Volume II*. The establishment of an oral history class at the high school ensures the publication of future volumes.

Bobby Glover

Keevan: My name is Keevan Labowitz, student historian from the North Coast Rural Challenge Network Oral History Project. I'm here today with Bob Glover. Thank you, Mr. Glover, for allowing us to talk with you.

Mr. Glover: You're very welcome.

Keevan: You were born here in Anderson Valley, right?

Mr. Glover: Wrong! I was born in Albion, on the coast. And one day I said to my mother, "I wish I would have been born early enough to take a ride on the old train that used to run from Albion into Christine."

And she says, "You durn fool! The first ride you ever took in your life was on that train." I was born in Albion, and she went down a couple of days later, took the train, and I rode back to Christine.

Keevan: What was it like growing up here back then?

Mr. Glover: Well, back then, a little later, we'll say, I used to go down over the brow of the hill when I heard the train coming down Mill Creek. And I'd get there till they got real close and it was making so much noise that I'd run in the house. That's some of my earliest memories. Everything that happened then seemed to be real smooth and easy. It wasn't like it is now where everybody is waiting for somebody else to make a mistake. Then, your mistakes were more or less forgiven, and you done better the next time, or you got your tail feathers paddled.

Keevan: Why did you decide to stay in Anderson Valley?

Mr. Glover: I didn't completely stay. I know that

after I graduated from high school, I was just dying to get out of this Valley. This was boring. I wanted to get to the city where everything was going on, where there were lots of girls. You understand that, don't you, Keevan?

Keevan: Uh huh (laughs).

Mr. Glover: All right. I went down and I became a radio announcer on KJBS and then on KSAN in San Francisco, then came back and lived here for a while. I got married a first time. Then after five years, our divorce came. She was going to bring suit against me, so I decided it was time to leave. So I went back to see a friend of mine, back in Hammond, Indiana. I lived there five years, and that's where I met my present wife.

Keevan: When did you meet her—what year?

Mr. Glover: In 1950. I was working for the General American Transportation Corporation in their plastics division. I was an electrician there, and—you want to hear the whole story?

Keevan: Yep.

Mr. Glover: All right, good. It was a New Year's night, and on New Year's night everyone who was old enough went out and celebrated. I had a bottle of Old Granddad in my back pocket. I walked into a paint shop on my rounds as an electrician, and I walked up to this girl I'd never talked to and asked her if she'd like a drink of whiskey.

Everything that happened then
seemed to be real smooth
and easy. It wasn't like it is
now where everybody is
waiting for somebody else to
make a mistake.

She said, "No, thank you." So we talked a while and I asked her if she'd like a ride home, and she agreed, and that did it.

Keevan: When did you come back here—soon after that?

Mr. Glover: 1955.

Keevan: You're known as one of the Boontling experts. Can you tell us how you learned the language?

Mr. Glover: Well, back around 1956, I believe it was, Channel 5—San Francisco came up for the dedication of the Hendy Grove State Park. They heard about this Boontling while they were up. They got a couple of fellows together (Jack June, Don Pardini) and interviewed them. And I saw a chance for a great ego trip. So I made an in-depth study of the language, and it's put me on television 68 times. And I went down to the Johnny Carson Show three times.

Keevan: Could you *harp* a bit for us?

Mr. Glover: Oh, I could *harp a wee swib*. Suppose I give you a Mother Goose nursery rhyme and you tell me what it is. Would you like that?

Keevan: I'll try.

Mr. Glover: Okay. *The eeld'm piked for the chiggrul nook, for gorms for her bahl belgeemer. But the nook was strung and the gorms were gone, and the bahl belgeemer had neemer. What was that?*

Keevan: Say it again.

Mr. Glover: *The eeld'm piked for the chiggrul nook, for gorms for her bahl belgeemer. But the nook was strung and the gorms were gone, and the bahl belgeemer had neemer.* The rhyme is preserved in it. You can

detect that.

Keevan: Oh, yeah. I know which one it is, I just don't remember the name of it.

Mr. Glover: How 'bout Old Mother Hubbard?

Keevan: Oh, yeah. There's no bone (laughs). You said you were on TV a lot. How many times did you say?

Mr. Glover: 68.

Keevan: Did you do the same thing every time?

Mr. Glover: No, no. I would be interviewed just like you're interviewing me now.

Keevan: We saw one of the tapes of someone interviewing you about ten years ago. When did most of the people interview you, like recently or a long time ago?

Mr. Glover: The answer to that is yes. Boontling is cyclic. It'll cycle up and then they'll all come in here, maybe two on the same day come in and interview. Then it dies down and there'll be hardly any for a long time. Then it'll cycle up again. It's starting to cycle up again now.

Keevan: Why do some people call you Chipmunk?

Mr. Glover: Well, that name was given me by Johnny Carson. What does a chipmunk do in the fall of the year?

Keevan: It gathers up a bunch of nuts.

Mr. Glover: Yeah, food. It gathers food. He's a saving person, isn't he? Well, my grandfather was a very saving person. He started out with 280 acres, and by the time he died it was 1,581 acres. And he

Bobby Glover *continued*

died with over a quarter of a million dollars cash and everything paid off—no indebtedness. So I inherited his capabilities, except for saving money.

I'm not too saving. He always said, "It's not the amount of money you make

that counts, it's the amount that you save." And that sure is true. If you notice the people that have money, it's hard to get a nickel out of them even. But those that don't have money, they're very free with their money.

Keevan: You save old jars and things like that.

Mr. Glover: Do you mean antique jars?

Keevan: Yeah.

Mr. Glover: Okay.

Keevan: That could be another reason someone might call you a chipmunk.

Mr. Glover: Yes, that could be. I've been saving antique canning jars since 1963. In my front room, you saw the case they're in. We inventoried them the other day, and there's a little over \$85,000 of my cost in that case.

Keevan: How old is it? About what year?

Mr. Glover: Well, the oldest jar I've got is about 1853, before John Landis Mason done the patent on his screw-top jar.

Keevan: Wow... What was the origin or the cause of Boontling?

Mr. Glover: Well, Boontling started in 1888. There was a quite wealthy family in San Francisco

Well, my grandfather was a very saving person. He started out with 280 acres, and by the time he died it was 1,581 acres. And he died with over a quarter of a million dollars cash and everything paid off—no indebtedness. So I inherited his capabilities, except for saving money. I'm not too saving.

that had a young daughter. And she became pregnant without benefit of clergy. So these folks didn't want any smirch on their family name. So they asked a lady here in Boonville—she was known as Aunt Jane Burger, she was a kindly lady—if the girl could come up and stay with her until she had the baby, and then make arrangements to adopt it out. Then the girl could return, and there'd be no smirch on the family name.

So this went along, and the girl was scheduled to come up here during the hop picking time. There used to be hops raised on the McGough field down at Farrers and down at Gowan's and in the Bell Valley at the Wallach place. So at hop picking time, all the farmers really loved it. They would get all their work caught up, get their wagon out there and get a stove on it, and beds and tables and everything, and they'd go to the hop fields. They'd set all this stuff up in a row out on the edge of the field and have a regular camp there. At hop picking, the ladies and the children would pick on one side of the field, and the men would pick on the other side. So this pregnant girl was working there, and it was hot, and everybody was sweatin', and boy, it was terrible. And the ladies of Anderson Valley wanted to talk about this girl, but they didn't want to hurt her feelings. So they invented a few coded words, of which none, to my knowledge, remain today.

And then in the evening, they'd come in. The ladies would quit picking early, and they'd cook big pot luck dinners, and everybody would sit

down and they'd eat. Then afterwards somebody'd break out a fiddle, and they'd all dance in the dust. And it was quite a festive affair. So then in the evening, they'd go to their tents and go to bed, and maybe if we listened closely, we could've heard mother and father tittering and laughing in the tents, as mother told father about these coded words.

Well, the men sort of caught on. On sheep shearing expeditions, up on the side of Bald Mountain in an old cabin made of split stuff lumber, there'd be a table. And the fellows would come in from shearing, and they'd have their long-handled underwear on, and they had bib overalls on and the front of 'em was just yellow from lanolin and wool where they'd been shearing. And they'd sit down, and they'd have a jug of port wine in the middle of the table, and they'd all drink. And they'd try to shark one another or deceive one another by inventing words. Well, those words fit with a natural mechanics. We may wonder how people that could hardly write could invent a language. But they were well-read. You see in those days, there wasn't television. There was nothing to interfere with the learning process. So they invented words until sheep shearing time was over.

Then they'd come down to the old Any Time Saloon. And one day a buggy came rumbling into Boonville. And the old boys that was sittin' in the old Any Time Saloon all got up and went outside to see who came into town. And a beautiful young lady stepped off. And as she stepped down on the step, a vagrant breeze elevated her skirt, and they saw her ankle. Well, now we have to invent words to describe the female anatomy. Okay, so it further got developed in the old Any Time Saloon.

We may wonder how people that could hardly write could invent a language. But they were well-read. You see in those days, there wasn't television. There was nothing to interfere with the learning process.

And each individual family, as they worked on it, invented different words to mean the same thing. But now Boontling has been integrated into one natural, incomplete language. It's a substructure of English, and there's about 1,360 words in the total vocabulary.

Keevan: Wow... Thank you very much, Mr. Glover, for talking with us.

Otilio Espinoza

Michael: My name is Michael Pugh, student historian. I'm here today with Otilio Espinoza. Thank you very much for allowing us to interview you, Mr. Espinoza.

Mr. Espinoza: I'm glad to be here, Mike. I really appreciate you guys inviting me to do this project.

Michael: We're glad to have you. Why, when and how did you come to Anderson Valley?

Mr. Espinoza: I came in Anderson Valley back in 1969 as a teenager right out of high school, to visit my older brother which was over here long before I came. I liked the area so much I start thinking about whether I want to go back [to Mexico] to college, which was my prime intentions. And I fall in love with the scenery and the climate and all the people around me, that I decide to wait one more year to go back and start college. And during that time I decided that is was a lot more fun to stay in the Anderson Valley community, which I stay in a lot longer than I expected.

Michael: What was your journey like when you came to Anderson Valley?

Mr. Espinoza: It was a nice one. When I left home, my brother called me up and said, "Why don't you come and spend the summer with me. It's awful nice, and the ocean is close to where we are." So it was an adventure in some sense, because when you are at the age of seventeen-and-a-half, you really don't know what to expect in another country.

When I came through L.A., I discovered that there was a life so different than what I grew up on. I didn't think too much of it. I lived there for two weeks, and I discovered that my journey wasn't to stay in L.A., but just to go through, come and visit my brother, and go back home.



But as I got to Philo, I discover the people in Anderson Valley are pretty much the same as we are over in my hometown, which is in the state of Zacatecas. People here—at the time there were mostly farmers and not too many activities as far as entertainments—you work six days a week and on the weekends either you go to Fort Bragg or Ukiah for some type of entertainments. Occasionally you'd have an entertainment in Navarro. That used to be a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful big dance and a big restaurant, and it was a wonderful entertainment place. I could not stay very long at this time because I wasn't 21. So therefore sometime you have to go to Fort Bragg where there was more entertainments for people under 21.

Michael: Where you lived before, were there lots of things to do for entertainment?

Mr. Espinoza: In my hometown, yes, because there is a town. At the time there was about 30,000 people. So it was a lot of activities for my age. But I wasn't a boy who liked to go out a lot. I was more a boy who was studying more than anything. And so when I came here, I came with the idea to try to discover something, to learn from other people. So I can go and concentrate and even maybe show some of my relatives or friends that this is how the United States of America live their lives and so on and so forth. So when I discover the community and style of life they have in Anderson Valley, it was almost similar to the one I have. It was a relief for me, because really to be honest with you Mike, you almost feel like you're really not outside your home.

So I decided to try another year. So two years went by, and at that time I met a young lady named Grace Gowan. It was such an adventure because she was a person that teach me a lot of things about Anderson Valley and the way they live. We become pretty close friends, to the point that she became my wife at the age of 18. The same Grace Gowan which is my wife for the last 25 years. So to me, I feel fortunate that I could find someone that I didn't know I could find in the Anderson Valley. But that's the way it happens.

Michael: How did you learn to speak English so well?

Mr. Espinoza: When I got to L.A., I discovered that it was very hard for anybody who comes to a country that don't speak the language that you speak. I just decided that if you want to stay for more than one week or more than one year, it's better for anybody to try to learn the language. So therefore, I went to a place where they sell these books in both English and Spanish, and I bought a book. So because I was young at the time I didn't have too much difficulty picking up the basics of English, what means "water," "restaurant," "bathroom," and the basic things normal people use in life. As I was learning that, I discovered that really you can do almost anything you want if you put in the effort.

So in a matter of about two and a half month from when I bought the book, I became so hooked up on the language that I decided to go

I was more a boy who was studying more than anything. And so when I came here, I came with the idea to try to discover something, to learn from other people.

buy another book that was a little more upgraded and a little more wise, as far as the language goes. By that time I can communicate to people very poorly, but I could communicate.

Talking to people helped me a lot because a lot of times they correct me. "This is the way you're going to say that, and this is the way you're going to say this." So it really helped me. But the part that was most helpful to me was that I'm not a shy person. I like to talk, and I like to communicate with people. A lot of people are afraid and think they may not say it right and they will not say it. To me that's a mistake, because if you want to say something in another language, you got to let it out for practice.

Then in 1969 there was a program in this very high school—maybe not the room we're speaking in right now. There was a teacher named Simon Ashiku from Europe—an awful good high school teacher. He had a program for night school for people who wanted to learn English. So I enrolled in the program, and I study with him for about six months. That helped me a lot to correct my mistakes as far as communicating to people. At this day I cannot tell you, Michael, that I speak the English language, because I don't. I just try to do the best I can.

Michael: Well, you do a good job at it.

Mr. Espinoza: I love the English language as well as the other two languages I like to study. I like Italian, and I also know a little bit about French, which I study quite a bit. Portuguese is also a wonderful language. But getting back to the question, I'm still learning to this day, and I don't think I'm going to finish learning the English language, because the more you investigate the more you learn. So the English language is a wonderful language, but it's not an easy language to learn. I probably would have preferred to learn Por-

Otilio Espinoza *continued*

tuguese, Italian, or French ten times before I learn the English language. But we're in America where they speak the English language, so we don't really have a choice. And I encourage anybody, even yourself, Mike, if you like a language, don't be ashamed and try to learn it, because it's good for you.

Michael: How has Anderson Valley changed since you arrived?

Mr. Espinoza: Anderson Valley, Mike, has been changing quite a bit. When I first got here the Spanish population was so few that you could actually count the people who live in Anderson Valley. As I recall there were only two families—one named Sanchez and another named Fernandes. So in that respect, Anderson Valley has changed from two families to maybe, I don't know, somewhere around 20 to 25 families that have kids in Anderson Valley's community.

I think the reason for that, Mike, is Anderson Valley, back 28 years ago, didn't have the agricultural business as far as the vineyards go. The apples were a lot bigger than what they are now. Some of these apple farms, they didn't hire families—mostly single men who come seasonally for six months at a time, and then they go back home to their families. Now when the grape community started developing in Anderson Valley, they start hiring more, a lot more people. Some of these families, they like the area so much, they start bringing their families into Anderson Valley. And I think that changed things a lot.

As a community of Anderson Valley, such as small as this one, when you have two different cultures, we want to make sure none of these cultures gets out of hand. I believe that the Constitution of the United States, when I study and become United States citizen, it had a piece in it that said everybody in the eyes of the law is equal. So some of

these communities, just because they come from some place else, it doesn't mean they are not equal. At the same time, the community that is already here, we have to try to understand their difference, but the most important part is to try to work together and to make sure no one is above the law.

Michael: What's it like to manage an apple farm the size of Gowan's?

Mr. Espinoza: It's an everyday challenge, Mike. You have to deal with so many different opinions, so many individuals who come everyday. And they might have had a hard night or a hard day at home, and they're not communicating. And so the job of the supervisor or foreman is to try to do the best they can so that you don't create a problem between you and your help. To me, I learn over my mistakes a lot.

Today, you try to tell the person what to do, but at the same time, you try to do it in a way where the person understand that you're not really overpowering him. You let them come to you and say, "Well, I'm finished, what can I do next?" So you go and inspect their job. If they do a good job then the next time you might let them take a little bit more responsibility in different areas. That makes them feel good. And by doing that, most of the times, it work in your favor. I learned that over the years. If you communicate with people and try to respect their opinion the same way you like them to respect yours, the people can work together very good.

Michael: Thank you very much, Mr. Espinoza, for sharing your stories with us.

Mr. Espinoza: Thank you.

Rob Goodell

Maya: My name is Maya Caldwell, student historian. I'm here today with Rob Goodell. Thank you very much for allowing us to interview you.

Mr. Goodell: I'm happy to be here.

Maya: Would you tell us why, when, and how you came to Anderson Valley?

Mr. Goodell: Well, yeah, I'd like to. It's a pretty long story. I think it's because I was always looking for the good life. I felt like I had "the good life" where I grew up in San Diego. It was a wonderful place—mountains, beaches, Mexico was nearby. But problems started in terms of population and pollution. Then down the road, I got involved—and this is a long story which I won't go into—I got involved with the Vietnam War, which changed my world view, or my view of how I see things, how I see society, how I see institutions interacting. I felt that I and my family wanted a freer life, a life where we could determine more of what we wanted rather than sort of be in a rat race, which is often how I see metropolitan-type areas.

We're both from California, my wife and myself, and we decided that we'd head for the hills, basically. We both had teaching jobs in San Diego. We'd take our Volkswagen bus up on weekends and holidays, and we'd search around the wild lands of Northern California. We liked Mendocino County because, basically it was the wildest. You know, Sonoma was less wild, and certainly Marin was much more sophisticated and pricey.

Maya: Yeah.

Mr. Goodell: And so we searched around and looked at all these remote places. We spent maybe a year looking, and then we discovered a piece of property right here in Anderson Valley. When we'd

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driven through Anderson Valley in the past, we'd looked at this place like, "Wow! That's like a picture book. It's so beautiful that it's almost unreal. We could never afford to live in a place like this." But finding a piece of property and buying it are two different things. The piece of property we bought is right near here as a matter of fact. So when we drove back there to take a look at it to see if this was the place where we wanted to spend, quote, "the rest of our lives," there was a caretaker there. She was known sort of as "the horse woman" in Anderson Valley, and she was quite a character. She was very, very protective of the ranch that she was caretaking, although she didn't own it. She tried to prohibit us from looking at the property, and she really didn't want us to be there. Come to find out—this is all part of the history of Anderson Valley, especially the contemporary history—she was growing marijuana in the back of the land there, so she didn't want anybody back there for that reason!

So, we had to sneak by her, and we camped up on the top of the land we own now in our Volkswagen bus. We wanted to get the feel for the land. We wanted to know it, not just by looking at it, but kind of hear it and sense it. So I remember the first night we camped there, when we woke up the next morning, there was this sunrise coming up as it usually does over towards Ukiah. I actually brought a poem. I wrote a poem about that experience because I was looking for some sign from the heavens that this was the right place to be. The sunrise was just incredible (laughs). I

Rob Goodell *continued*

said, "I'll never forget this. This was it!" So that's kind of how we got here, in terms of the land, and some of the motivation for getting here.

Maya: Why did you decide to stay here?

Mr. Goodell: Well, we knew we were in the zone. We knew we were in the place we wanted to be. It wasn't quite near enough to the coast for us, but it had the right agricultural temperature range for what we wanted to do, which was a lot of farming, gardening, orchards. The soil was pretty good, and on our particular piece of land, we were looking not only for one with a view, or nice trees, but a place that would fulfill a homestead. Because that's basically what we came here for. We came to come back to the land. As close as you could call our lifestyle would be homesteading. It would be the attempt to live in harmony with nature, and at the same time, living off nature. That's a very difficult balance.

We stayed here because it was like a marriage. We kind of fell in love with the land, and we felt that homesteading is a long-term project, and that was what we wanted to do. This is where we wanted to stay, and interestingly enough—and this is kind of naïve on our part—we didn't look at the society of Anderson Valley. We didn't say, "Well, what kind of people are here? What kind of schools are here? Are they going to like us? Are we going to like them?" We just felt like if we liked the land, everything was going to work out. And of course, it has, so far anyway. It's been very successful. So homesteading fulfilled us; we've raised our kids on the land.

Maya: What do you like about Anderson Valley?

Mr. Goodell: Well, you know, the more I live here, the more I like it. I do like

the people here. That's taken some time! I mean, it's a different culture here. There is no one dominant culture, and that I really like. A lot of people think they're in the "in" group, and they can think that, but the reality is that we're a diversified group of people coming from different places. And we have clusters of interest, and all the clusters of different parts of this Valley come together at times, because we all love this place. And I think that's what the common bond is. We all care about it.

Back when I was arriving as the back-to-the-landers, and at the same time also hippies—using a very general term—we were all kind of strange creatures to a lot of people, you know. Newcomers often didn't seem to relate. Not that they were negative, but they didn't seem to relate to a lot of the people's lifestyles who were already here. And yet, we were more or less tolerated, and now, we're part of the community.

Maya: How has Anderson Valley changed since you've been here?

Mr. Goodell: Well, I think the answer is grapes. And interestingly, with that, a larger Mexican population, which has changed the Valley subtly. They've come and they've adapted, and they've had a bigger challenge than a lot of us because they have a lot of new cultural and language challenges. It's been a very, very harmonious (historically speaking) transition now from immigrant, to citizen, to community member, to friend. I think that if you look at the elementary school especially, it's evident there that the community is bonded and bonding. Not that there aren't potential problems and a lot of challenges. There are. [But] my personal feeling is that it enriches our culture.

I think that if you look at the elementary school especially, it's evident there that the community is bonded and bonding.

Maya: Can you tell us about your family?

Mr. Goodell: Sure. I have two sons, and my wife, Barbara. Barbara's from Northern California, and we met in Hawaii, on the verge of myself going into the Marine Corps and the Vietnam War. We had sort of a dramatic courtship.

I was going to San Diego State; she was going to U.C. Berkeley. U.C. Berkeley was a center for protest against the Vietnam War, and San Diego State was a center for surfing and drinking. So when I came up to Berkeley I had sort of a profound awareness of the Vietnam War, and I began to think maybe the Vietnam War wasn't a very good thing and that I was involved in something way over my head. And I sure was!

So we met in Hawaii. We courted at Berkeley, but then, halfway through my time in the Marine Corps, it looked like I wasn't going to go to Vietnam. Since things were happening over there—like a lot people getting killed for not very good reasons—we didn't want to marry until that was behind us. But anyway, it looked like I wasn't going to Vietnam, so we [decided to get] married. The night before I got married, I got a call from the guy in charge of my company, and he thought this was the greatest joke. He said, "Lieutenant, guess what? I've got orders to Vietnam for you!"

So these were very dramatic things—going to Vietnam, getting married. And that was sort of the start of our marriage, which has been a long one—almost 30 years so far. I hope it continues on.

We had a few years together, and then we had kids, two sons, like I said before, and they were both raised on the land. They were raised in, you might say, initially humble circumstances. We didn't have a house initially. Then we had half a house, then three-quarters of a house, then about seven-eighths of a house, and we have about nine-tenths of a house now!

And so they had an experience that we really wanted to give them, too. We wanted them to be not only living in a nice place with green landscapes and nice trees, but something a little more in depth. We wanted them to know the animals. We wanted them to know the trees, the plants. We wanted them to be able to appreciate their environment and feel free and wild—and also to know the responsibilities of hunting and gathering your own food and working for your own food.

I mean, they weren't like nature freaks, though. They were into the same things everybody else was in high school—maybe a little bit too much so. But they did have this exposure that, as parents, we wanted them to have. They're out in the world now and checking it out, and so far the reports are that Anderson Valley's a pretty good place to come back to—but not too soon. They have a few more things they have to experience.

Maya: Thank you very much, Mr. Goodell, for sharing your stories with us.

Donald Pardini

Lulu: My name is Lulu McClellan, student historian. I'm here today with with Donald Pardini. Thank you, Mr. Pardini, for inviting us into your home to talk to you.

Mr. Pardini: You're welcome. It's nice to have you.

Lulu: You were born here in the Valley, right?

Mr. Pardini: No, I wasn't, and I really hate to answer that question, because I wanted to be born in the Valley. My parents were living in a log camp in Peachland, and when I was about ready to come along, my mother went to Stockton because her mother lived there—she was a midwife. So my Mom went to Stockton, and I was born there. Two weeks later we came back to Anderson Valley.

Lulu: What was it like growing up here back then?

Mr. Pardini: Oh, I had really fun times in Navarro when I was a kid. You kinda had the run of the place. You could go fishing anywhere or hunting. Well, it was sort of like a ghost town there in Navarro with all the old buildings and train sheds and the old sawmill. You could play on all of it. We spent a lot of time doing that. It was really fun.

Lulu: What was school like when you were young?

Mr. Pardini: Much different than today. One room, one teacher, eight grades, and if you got out of line you got your butt whipped, and I mean good. I'm not so sure—maybe some of that shouldn't go on the tape—but I'm from the old school, and that's how I believe. One of the teachers we had, a man, kept a box of barn shingles along side of his desk. If you got out of line, he'd bend you over his

knees and bust off a handful of shingles on your backside. And when he got done, you cleaned up the mess. Then when your mom found out, you might get another thrashing when you got home.

Lulu: Why did you decide to stay in Anderson Valley?

Mr. Pardini: There was never a doubt in my mind that I wouldn't be here for the rest of my life. My roots were here, my family, I was at home. I just knew I'd never be happy anywhere else but in Anderson Valley. I just never had the desire to leave here. Like I said, it was just home.

Lulu: How has Anderson Valley changed in your lifetime?

Mr. Pardini: Well, there has been a lot of changes. There are, as far as I'm concerned, far too many people here. This probably isn't a very nice thing to say, but between the tourists and the traffic, Boonville—I should say Anderson Valley—has become a destination. People are actually coming to Boonville for, you know, the beer and the Hotel and other things. It's just too many newer people. People don't get that, because they weren't here all their lives like I was. And we have seen it quiet and peaceful, without all the noise and the racket and whatever goes on now.

Lulu: The first time you met with us, you explained that Navarro (Navahrro) is really pro-

There was never a doubt in my mind that I wouldn't be here for the rest of my life. My roots were here, my family, I was at home. I just knew I'd never be happy anywhere else but in Anderson Valley.

nounced Navairro. Can you tell us a little about how Navarro used to be?

Mr. Pardini: Yeah, something I'd like to mention would be how it was there when I was a young guy. Everybody, or most of the families, had a cow and of course chickens and pigs and everything. Times were hard and that's how you lived.

Milk cows ran on the highway and the railroad tracks. And after the morning milking we'd turn them loose. We had bells on them. And you know, maybe the cows would leave the road to find some better grass, and we'd listen for the bells. They might be anywhere from Floodgate to Northfork. And they'd generally get together during the day and be in a bunch at night. And at night, the boys in the family would go gather them. We'd come by our house, and our cow would stop and come in. Then the next family's cow would stop and come in. We'd milk them that night and keep them in the barn or a pen and turn them loose again the next morning. I don't know that any of them got hit by a car.

And the same way with the chickens. Everybody's chickens got together and had a good time and they laid eggs in the redwood suckers. And if you needed eggs, you went out and parted the bushes and got you some fresh eggs. Things like that I remember, I really miss. You couldn't do that again, no way. A cow wouldn't last ten minutes on that highway.

Lulu: Can you tell us something about Boontling—its origin?

Mr. Pardini: The version I like—and there are several—and I think is probably right is that Boontling actually started up in the hop flats in Bell Valley, you know, where the Toll House is. They used to grow hops there, and it seems that the women actually started it. They were doing

some gossiping, and the kids got ahold of it, and I don't know, they made a little trouble with the families. So these women started—well, they ended up being Boontling words to what they call “shark the kids,” which meant to fool them. But the kids weren't fooled, and the first thing you know, they were picking up the words and learning Boontling. I think that's probably the way it really started.

Lulu: How did you learn Boontling?

Mr. Pardini: I learned most of my Boontling when we came to Boonville in 1946. We knew a few words in Navarro. Like I knew “tweed,” which was a kid boy. I knew “applehead”—that was your girlfriend. And I knew a few other words that I can't mention. But that's about all we knew down there. When I came to Boonville, I picked up a lot.

Lulu: Can you tell us any other old time stories about Anderson Valley?

Mr. Pardini: Yeah, we could talk a little about the old party line—the telephone. They tell the story about John Lee Rector. He used to live out here toward Yorkville. He liked to listen to everybody's conversation. In fact most of them did. When the phones rang in those days—they were the old hand-crank type—the rings might be two longs and a short, or whatever. Anyhow, there was a lot of what Boontlingers called “jennybeckin.” That meant listening to a phone conversation you shouldn't be listening to.

John Lee Rector was real bad for this, and everyone knew it. Vern and Hale Burger set him up one time. They got on the subject of sheep, and they knew that—well, they could hear John popping his lips wanting to say something. Pretty soon, one of them made a statement, and he said, “Ain't that right, John?” And the guy goes, “Yeah,

Donald Pardini *continued*

you're damn right!" and then hung the phone up.

Lulu: You come from a family that's been in the Valley a longtime. Can you tell us about the Pardini?

Mr. Pardini: Yeah, I might say that I'm really not a Pardini. My Dad was adopted by Joe Pardini. His name was Guisti. My grandmother went with Joe Pardini in Italy. Guisti came along, and she married him. Joe Pardini was heartbroken. He came to America to Elk and later moved to Navarro.

Three years later Grandpa Guisti died in Italy. Joe Pardini heard of this, and he wrote a letter to Grandma and asked her to come to America and marry him. He would send money. By this time, she had my dad and my aunt, so she did, and Joe Pardini adopted my dad. Him and Grandma never hit it off. It didn't work. They had another son, Danny, and he was killed at Dimmick Park in 1951. But the marriage never worked.

By the time Grandma got here, Grandpa Joe Pardini was drinking and gambling a lot, and it was really hard for her and two kids. She took in laundry and did all kinds of things to make a go of it, until finally they got the hotel in Navarro that had been built originally to be a hospital and drug store. That didn't work out because they decided they wanted this closer to the mill, so Grandma had saved enough, and with a little help from her brother, they bought this building and made a hotel out of it.

Lulu: Wow. Do you have any other stories about Anderson Valley before we close?

Mr. Pardini: Yeah, I'd like to tell you one about myself. One morning, before I left home, I heard a lot of gunshots up towards my grandmother's hotel. We lived about 200 yards away. I run out the door to see what was happening, and there were several people outside with shotguns, shooting in the air. And somebody hollered, "The War's over!" It was the end of World War II, so I thought, "I better help them out a bit."

So I ran in and got my Dad's shotgun, and I ran down off the porch steps and in my haste to get some rounds in the air, I shot my Dad's spare tire off the pickup. My mother came out, and she says, "You know, I think World War Three's going to start when your dad gets home." He was so happy the war was over, it was no problem.

Lulu: Thank you very much, Mr. Pardini, for sharing your stories with us. This has been Lulu McClellan, a seventh grader from the Anderson Valley NCRCN's Oral History Project.

Reflections on Voices of the Valley

by Mitch Mendosa, teacher

Teacher Mitch Mendosa prepared in spring 2001 the following narrative, which describes from start to finish the steps he and his students have followed in their work to preserve the stories of local elders.

Introduction

Our oral history project, *Voices of the Valley*, connects two seemingly incongruous groups: teenagers and elders. We've found the combination intriguing and fruitful.

Both populations are disenfranchised. Teenagers are at a crossroads, trying to define how they'll fit into society. They are no longer little children, yet they are not considered adults. They yearn for opportunities to show they can contribute something worthwhile. They thrive on community acceptance and praise.

Our elders, on the other hand, have contributed for a long time, seen societal dynamics sway, and lived through some of the events that our history books can only take a stab at describing. They possess wisdom and the gift of retrospect that only

living awhile can provide. Every generation seems so engrossed in its own pursuits and so convinced that previous generations lack the capacity to understand contemporary missions that far too frequently our elders are cast aside and ignored.

At the same time, computer advancements have brought sophisticated technology into our schools, enabling us to produce books and compact discs. Allowing students to use their innate curiosity and advanced computer skills to collect and preserve our elders' stories connects students and community in unprecedented and invaluable ways.

Background

In 1997, a schedule glitch awarded a free period to eight seventh graders. Having just begun a position as teacher on special assignment, I challenged the group to create a meaningful project that would contribute significantly to our school and community. After much debate, the class decided to create an oral history book of Anderson Valley. Students and teacher alike began the long process of learning how to produce a high-quality volume. Since we all felt strongly about preserving the voices of the elders interviewed, we had to learn digital audio technology as well.

Two years later, *Voices of the Valley, Volume I*, a book and audio compact disc set, was complete. The Volume I staff had no way of knowing what an impact their creation would have: *Voices of the Valley* has developed into a regular class at the high school; our congressman, Mike Thompson, has endorsed the project as a Local Legacy project, celebrating the bicentennial of the



Reflections on *Voices of the Valley* continued

Library of Congress, where all the volumes are now housed; and our community has embraced the project, looking forward to the book-signing events every spring.

In an attempt to involve more students, our faculty and administration made *Voices of the Valley, Volume II* part of the ninth-grade English curriculum in 1999. Since the scope of the project is too large to fit within an existing curriculum, we decided to stretch it over a two-year period. The first year, students created the project's focus, selected elders to interview, and conducted and taped the conversations. The following year, a new group of ninth-grade English students transcribed the interviews, did the photography and layout work, and created the compact disc.

At the time, the plan seemed like a good idea; in retrospect, we saw three problems with this approach. First, though both groups participated in the culminating celebrations, no students experienced the project from beginning to end. Project solidarity was lacking, and students missed out on learning important skills that the other group attained. Second, all the laborious transcribing fell on the shoulders of the latter group—a situation made more unfair because these students were transcribing interviews that they hadn't even participated in. Lastly, since the project was part of a

traditional English class, many students saw it as just another requirement—and not as a privilege.

To address these shortcomings, teachers and administrators made further adjustments, and in the fall of 2000 we offered *Voices of the Valley* as an elective course for ninth through twelfth graders. We were looking for a varied group that could benefit most from a project like this—and yet be able to pull it off. From a long list of interested students, we chose a diverse staff based on age, ability, experience, ethnicity, and gender. The following narrative chronicles the activities of this group of students—the staff that created *Voices of the Valley, Volume III*.

Volume III Process and Timeline

Getting Organized. The construction of each volume begins by giving students control over all the major decisions. By doing so, it truly becomes their work and learning is taken to heights unachievable in traditional teacher-imposed pedagogy. The processes that the Volume I students created in 1997 are still adhered to in spirit, but every new staff chooses different methods to accomplish the tasks.

The Volume III staff began by reading newspaper and magazine articles written about earlier volumes of the project to gain a broader perspective and to begin to create staff solidarity. An early challenge facing the new staff was to create a scope and sequence that would allow it to finish a book and compact disc in half the time needed by the previous group. While devising the timeline (Figure 1), the students decided to reduce the number of interviews from 14 to ten.



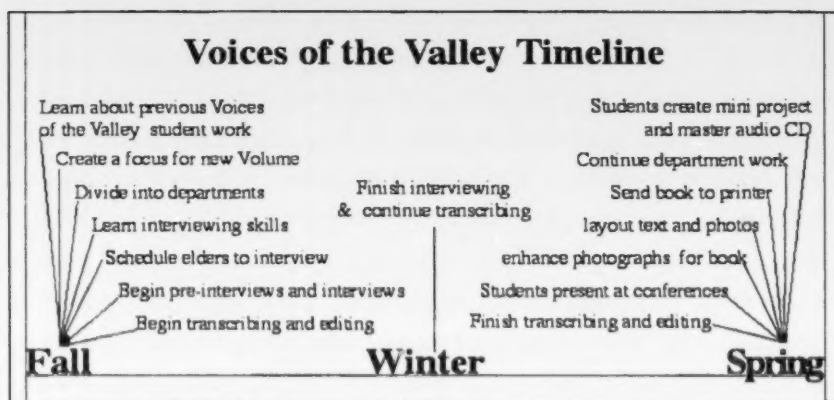


FIGURE 1

The next major decision was to determine the focus of the volume. During the planning stages of the first volume in 1997, the students defined various subgroups of Valley people and chose to interview individuals within these groups. The staff of the second volume wanted to focus on old Valley stories and continue the exploration of the Mexican population that the first staff had initiated. The Volume III staff wanted to build on what the previous staff had started but also wanted to get to know some of the interesting people who have moved here during the last few decades.

The students next listed the tasks involved in production and divided themselves into departments to complete them most efficiently (Figure 2). This articulated organizational plan defined what students were to do with any "down time." New learning experiences and products arose as a result. The distribution department, for example, made six attractive redwood book racks that were given to local merchants to display books and compact discs for sale. The advertising department created a brochure that is now widely used for promotion and distributed at conferences where students present the project. It's interesting to note that these departments were

Department Descriptions

ACCOUNTING/AUDIO TECHNOLOGY:

- Accounting of sales
- Convert digital audio tapes to quicktime files
- Master compact disk, sticker, and inserts

ADVERTISING:

- Prepare for and oversee apple fair sales and advertising
- Create and distribute brochure
- Create website
- Contact email list for current and future sales

DISTRIBUTION/LAYOUT:

- Build display racks
- Distribute books and CDs to local merchants

- Restock merchants' supplies
- Layout final version of book

EDITING/PHOTO WORK:

- Work with Maria to establish punctuation and grammar standards
- Edit transcriptions daily
- Scan and enhance photos

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

- Contact elders to interview
- Create and produce staff t-shirts
- Take digital photos of processes
- Create PowerPoint presentation

FIGURE 2

Viewing the Valley through the eyes of someone who has lived elsewhere gives us perspective and acts as a reminder of how special Anderson Valley is. Besides, the stories are just too good to pass up!

Reflections on Voices of the Valley *continued*

most relevant at the beginning of the year; their importance waned as interviewing and transcribing inundated all the students.

Interviews. Preparations to interview began next. The students decided that in order to get the full experience, everyone would participate in at least two interviews, though many chose to do more. We discussed in depth the characteristics of a good interview and practiced these methods on each other. Then the vice-principal came in for a mock interview. A small group of student volunteers performed both a pre-interview conversation and a recorded interview.

After, the vice-principal gave a valuable oral critique from the perspective of the person being interviewed. His observations about students' initial greeting of him, nonverbal body language, and conversational techniques were very helpful in their interview preparation. The practice was also useful in our recording work. We had just purchased a mixer board, enabling us to increase the number of microphones from two to six. The session with the vice-principal allowed students in the Audio Technology department to learn how to use the new equipment in a non-threatening setting. The trial run was a good idea; the recording proved substandard. A lot more practice on the equipment followed before the real interviews.



The next step was to decide on the individuals to interview. As mentioned, this staff wanted to continue to collect stories from longtime Valley residents and the more recently settled Mexican population, but they also wanted to look for interesting people who didn't fit these two categories. The students and their teacher listed names on the board, with a sentence describing what might be interesting about each. The group debated qualifications of the nominees, then voted by secret ballot. Two students tallied the votes and created a ranking.

An interesting dilemma ensued for the teacher. The elder who received the most votes was a relative newcomer to the Valley. She currently works at the dump but had been the *Playboy Magazine* Playmate of the Year in the '50s. The teacher's initial reaction was to override the students' decision to interview her, because doing so would probably upset many of the more conservative factions in town. After much debate with his class, he decided that student decisionmaking should overrule worries about community perception and allowed them to proceed. You can be assured that many sleep-deprived nights followed for the teacher.

Students from the public relations department then began to contact the elders chosen to schedule pre-interview and interview dates. All but

two of the elders contacted were thrilled by the request. Despite numerous phone calls by our zealous public relations department, the Playmate of the Year remained steadfast in her denial. The teacher began sleeping again.

A week before an elder was interviewed, we held a pre-interview, where students and elders got to know each other. The awkwardness inherent to any first meeting dissolved as stu-

Conversation Topics for Jim and Jo Gowan Interview

This is Dave Gowan, Gabe Shapiro, Eva Barrigan, Jessica Waggoner, and Leah Collins, student historians from the North Coast Rural Challenge Network's Oral History Project in Anderson Valley.

JESSICA: We're here today with Daniel's grandparents James and Jo Gowan. Thank you very much, Mr. and Mrs. Gowan, for joining us!

DANIEL: Our family has been here a long, long time. Will you tell us about some of our earlier ancestors?

Possible topics:

- How did the Gowans & Studebaker families get here?
- Traded horses for the property (160 acres first, then 240 acres)
- Dairy cows 1st
- How did the Gowans get into apples? What year was this?
- Still have very old trees producing apples (photographs?)

GABE: How many different varieties of apples did they start out with and how many do you grow now?

Possible topics:

- Best apples for their famous juice
- Which types of apples sell the best?
- Which apples will keep in the warehouse the longest?

EVA: Who built the Oak Tree fruit stand?

Possible Topics: (show photographs?)

- When was it built?
- How has it changed? (used to put out a coffee can for \$\$)
- How did it get its name?

JESSICA: Eva, you've worked at The Oak Tree for a while. What's it like to work there?

LEAH: We've learned that there used to be many apple and sheep ranches in the Valley. How and why were the Gowans able to stay in apples?

- Different ways they sell their apples
- Mr. Gowan's Grandfather had a wagon he peddled from - where did he sell?
- James and Jo go to Farmers' markets 5 days a week (similar to his grandfather)

FIGURE 3

dents and elders discussed which conversation topics would be brought up during the interview. We've moved away from creating a long list of questions, instead drawing up a short outline of conversation topics with possible sub-topics for each (Figure 3). During the pre-interviews, students tried to explore possible topics without the elder going into too much depth. That way, the best details were saved for the taped interview; the conversation stayed fresh for students, and the elder didn't feel as if he were repeating himself.

For each recorded interview, three to five students participated in the conversation, two students ran the digital audio equipment, and one student took photos either before or after the interview. In most cases, students interviewed only one person

at a time, but often they interviewed a couple, and in two cases, a family. Although each student knew which conversation topic(s), he/she was responsible for bringing up, all students were encouraged to participate in the conversation, commenting and asking qualifying or follow-up questions. The conversation topic guide worked as a loose road map showing where the interview might go. It gave students the safety net of knowing that when a given topic waned, another student was ready to bring up another, but it also allowed the freedom to explore stories in-depth and change the course of conversation when an opportunity arose. This practice provided a much more comfortable and natural method of collecting stories than just asking questions, receiving answers, then moving on to the next subject.

Reflections on Voices of the Valley *continued*

Transcription and Editing. Since the transcription process demanded months of diligent (and tedious) work, students insisted that everyone participate. We divided each interview into five-minute audio segments. Students then chose segments from various interviews, so everyone became familiar with all of the elders. Maria Goodwin, our district's confidential assistant to the superintendent and a trained editor, created a style sheet (Figure 4) and worked with the whole staff

on punctuation standards and assisted the student editors.

The transcription process began with students listening to the audio and typing what they thought was said. Student editors, both native English speakers and advanced ESL students, read the drafts and marked areas that needed attention. The transcribers then listened again, corrected the errors (seeking help if needed), then passed the revised versions back to the student editors. This process continued until the student editors saw fit to show them to Maria, who read the transcriptions while listening to the audio and returned them to the students for final editing.

Style Sheet, October 2000

Titles: use Times New Roman/24/bold

All text: use Times New Roman/14/ normal/justified

Use correct title for persons being interviewed, for example: Mr. Jones, Ms. Smith, Mrs. Jones.

DATE ALL YOUR WORK

Two spaces after colon—example below—

Mrs. Jones: I hope you don't mind my telling you...

Numbers one to ten are usually written out, numbers over ten are usually shown in numerals: 25,000, 1,400, etc.

Dates are shown as: 1900s (no apostrophe) and '54.

Set your margins at 1" top, bottom, right, and left.

Two returns between paragraphs.

Use two dashes together — to show abrupt change in conversation or when two speakers interrupt each other.

See various examples attached.

Photography and Layout. After completing all the transcriptions, students began the task of preparing the photographs they had gathered earlier. Throughout the interviewing period, two students had been in charge of taking a digital photo of each elder. These shots were generally "staged," after the interview had concluded, to avoid disrupting the conversations. To complement these contemporary images, elders also had brought with them their own historical photos, which two students duplicated using a scanner after each interview. Elders often accompanied these students to the computer lab, where they received an impromptu demonstration of how the scanner worked. We returned scanned photos to their owners immediately, thereby preventing any anxiety elders might feel about leaving behind prized family photographs.

The staff greatly enjoyed the several weeks of photography work, coming as it did on the heels of the laborious transcription process. Receiving instruction in Adobe PhotoShop, students first learned how to manipulate and enhance contemporary and historical photographs. Then, in a process repeated until all the

FIGURE 4

pictures were done, each student worked on his or her own rendition of the same photo, ultimately printing out a final copy to hang anonymously on a board with all the other similar efforts. When all the versions of a given photo were mounted on the wall, the staff took a vote to decide which one would go into the book. After all the photographs had been selected in this way, two students then took on the job of laying them out into the text using Adobe PageMaker. Once the layout staff finished its work, the final document was ready for the printer—seven long months after we began.

Mini-Projects. In the past, the only activity undertaken after the book had been sent to the printer was creating the compact disc. Now that the project is its own class, we have more time for additional endeavors.

New to the construction of Volume III, for example, is the spring mini project. Once the book was sent to the printer, students developed a mini project that would utilize the skills they learned during the project and that would be meaningful to themselves and their families. Two students are creating family oral his-



This photo is one of many collected and scanned by the students. One of the dancers is a citizen of Anderson Valley.

on National Public Radio's Youth Radio Project. A small group of students is creating a Voices of the Valley web site. Another student is creating a digital portfolio containing all of his project-based

tory documents. One is interviewing various close and distant family members in an attempt to learn the truth about the murder of her grandfather in Mexico. Another student is interviewing AIDS patients around Mendocino county to create a booklet describing the causes and available treatment options. One student is creating a Voices of the Valley radio documentary, which we hope will play county-wide and



A newspaper clipping about an interviewee, Carroll Pratt, is an example of documents collected and scanned by students.

PRATT IS NOW PRISONER

Somewhere in a German Prison Camp, Oct. 12, 1943.

Dear Dad: (Ed. Note. Skipper Pratt to the Studio):

"I really meant it when I said that things were much better than could be expected. I've met many fellows that I knew. We have our own organization and little intervention from our captors. We form combines of six or seven and cook our own meals. (Food from the Red Cross and the German government). Please donate to the Red Cross and the Prisoner of War Fund!

'We are allowed to receive all the mail we want, and one ten pound package a month . . . specifically need handkerchiefs, socks, underwear, small knife, candy, gum.

Number Came and Went

"One thing I felt sure when the chute opened was that now I was sure I'd see you again . . . my number came and went.

"Carroll (Lt. Carroll Pratt)."

Reflections on Voices of the Valley *continued*

learning experiences. Two students are asking Anderson Valley merchants for donations to raffle off at our June book signing; proceeds will go towards the purchase of a new compact disc burner for next year's staff. Last, but certainly not least, a group of students is creating the compact disc that will accompany Volume III.

Evaluation

On the first day of school, students wrote paragraphs describing what they already knew about the project and what they would like to learn. (These are the first two steps in the "Know, Want to Learn, and Learned" evaluative tool.) In April, students completed the exercise by writing a paragraph about what they learned (Figure 5). Also at the beginning of the year, the staff helped create a

Performance Chart. Students selected skills that would be needed to complete the project. These skills became headings on a chart used by the teacher to evaluate student performance, with notes written in appropriate boxes (Figure 6). In the process of creating this portfolio, the need for regular student self-evaluation became apparent. We developed a weekly self-evaluation form to assess the skills students had identified as important in the fall (Figure 7). Throughout the spring, students will fill out these forms every Friday.

Finally, at the end of the year, students will write a reflective piece reviewing what they have learned. They will also evaluate the methods they developed during the year and write letters to next year's staff advising them on things to consider and pitfalls to avoid.

"Know, Want to Learn, Learned" Evaluative Tool:

Sample Student Response

August 28, 2000

KNOW: I know that we interview significant people in the valley.

WANT TO LEARN: I want to know how to do the mechanical stuff, because that is my weak spot. I am pretty good at interviewing, because I have been on radio before. However, I barely know which switch is on for a light. I want to learn how to master the computer and the tape recorder.

April 6, 2001

LEARNED: I have learned a lot in Oral History. I have improved my interviewing skills, my computer skills, and my mechanical editing skills.

Last year I interviewed a person for Volume II. In that interview I just stuck to the script and never really asked my own questions. This year I have improved

tremendously. I did three interviews and every one I did I got better. I am not afraid to ask a question. I have become a lot better at thinking on my feet.

Throughout my life computers have never liked me and I have never liked them. I think the reason for our bad relationship was that I never had much experience with a computer. However, things have changed. I now am much better at typing, and I now know the basic techniques for operating a computer. I used to touch type, but now I have mastered the keyboard and am pretty fast.

In my past I used to not care about punctuation. But now I am aware that punctuation is a very important part of writing. I understand that things need to be perfect.

Voices of the Valley is the bomb.

FIGURE 5

Performance Chart: Voices of the Valley, Volume III							
Spring Mini Project	Motivation	Accuracy	Organization	Flexibility	Tech. Skills	Behavior	Communication
Erika: website							
Daniel: CD							
Aimee: family oral history							
Stefan: fund-raising							
Dominic: digital portfolio							

FIGURE 6

Weekly Self-Assessment Form: Voices of the Valley, Volume III							
Name:	Motivation	Accuracy	Organization	Flexibility	Tech. Skills	Behavior	Communication
Date:							
Notes:							

FIGURE 7

Reflections from Students Participating in *Voices of the Valley, Volume III*

*The following excerpted comments come from all 16 of the students, spanning grades nine through 12, who participated in the year-long elective course that produced *Voices of the Valley, Volume III* during the 2000-01 school year. Students recorded their reflections on an audio CD that accompanies the *Volume III* book.*

"*Voices of the Valley* to me is something that every little town or even city should have. Because I think when you live in a place, you should be able to know about it. If somebody asks you what your town is, you should be able to know what your history is, and *Voices of the Valley* is a way we can preserve the memories.

"We learned interview skills, and we learned how to communicate with people and how to preserve the history of our valley. To me, I take a lot of pride in learning how to do that and being able to work with the people in my community, and people I didn't even know. And I got to know them. And then we run into them in town the next day, they remember you, and they love the fact that they're being included in preserving Anderson Valley's history."

—sophomore

"This oral history project has taught me a lot about history from a personal perspective—talking to the people rather than from a history book kind of perspective. And it's made me see the different periods of history better, in a personal way. It's also taught me a lot of typing skills and better communication skills. I find that a lot of the time it's hard for younger people to talk to elders, because bridging the time gap can be difficult.

"Also for me, being a senior, it feels good to be able to give something back to my community that I leave—just leaving something behind, for them to know that their stories will be preserved in history.

"The most significant experience of all the interviews was probably when Bud Johnson just on the spot made up a song for me. It made me just see the greatness of all the people we interviewed, the talent that would be forgotten if we didn't write them down. So it just made me feel really good that his history was preserved."

—senior



"I've been in *Voices of the Valley* two years now. The books I did were *Voices of the Valley, II and III*. When I got here, I didn't know any English. The only words I know is "hi" and "what's your name?" But now that I'm doing this [project] I'm getting better at it. I know how to transcribe faster and to translate Spanish to English or English to Spanish. This is a good thing to do, especially for those people who want to learn more English and Spanish."

—sophomore



"I thought it was kind of important that we interviewed my grandparents during this project. I learned a lot about my family that I didn't know—about how we got here and how everything sort of ties together. And I think that's important that I have that in my knowledge and that my kids can know about that and their kids."

—junior



"I was involved in the *Voices of the Valley* project. One of the good things that I can remember about this was that my first interview was going to be with Ross Murray. I had called him up before to get him to be in our project. I met him at the fair, and we talked a little while, and I remember he said, "I want you to be one of my interviewers, I want you to interview me." That was kind of weird for me, because I had never interviewed anybody.

"It was a great experience. It's something I'll remember for the rest of my life."

—senior



"As you might know, this project is about preserving our valley stories. My contribution in making this project was in audio. I figured out how to make the transcribing easier. I figured out how to loop the audio so that the students who were transcribing didn't have to play, rewind, stop, and play the audio over and over again. Now my contribution is our mini-project. My mini-project is to select different parts of the interview's audio, and after we selected the parts, we go through it and edit it. After that we burn it onto an audio CD. When we are finished burning audio CDs, we sell them with the book."

—freshman



"This class is really important for me. I met people I never imagined meeting before. . . This project is really helpful, because it is about my valley, the valley where I grew up. I learned a lot of things in this class. I learned how to edit audio and how to edit photographs and stories about my valley that I didn't know before. I participated in some of the interviews and did a lot of typing and translating. The translation was easy for me.

"The making of this book was a big process and a lot of dedication, also a lot of teamwork."

—senior



"*Voices of the Valley* has been awesome for me. I've been part of the book for two years now. And the first book that I was a part of, I wasn't real excited about it, because we had to do it for English class—and it was a project, and we had to do it. And the first guy I interviewed was Bill Lawson and, you know, he was 96 years old and I was a little scare of him, so I didn't really ask a lot of questions. I was a little timid.

Reflections from Students *continued*

"But I joined the class as an elective this year, and I found out that I really liked it a lot more. I found out that I was a lot better as an interviewer, I asked a lot more questions. And I noticed that interviewing has been a good thing for me, and I might want to do it in the future, might want to do broadcasting or something like that. So *Voices of the Valley* has broadened my horizons, and it has helped me maybe find out a field for the future."

—sophomore



"I was in two interviews, in two completely Spanish interviews. Those were the ones that I liked the most. Then we had to transcribe and translate, Spanish to English. And I really enjoyed this class with everyone. I also learned how to photo-edit, and that was really helpful. I hope that *Voices of the Valley* keeps continuing doing some more books and CDs, so everyone will care about us and our valley."

—senior



"I think this project is so unique, because it preserves the history of this valley through the stories told by people who actually witnessed the events, unlike most history, which is stitched together by historians.

"My parents being the first to immigrate to the U.S. from our family in Europe, I grew up learning a lot about European history and not a lot about U.S. history, therefore believing that U.S. history was quite boring. But this project really opened my eyes to how interesting this valley really is.

"It also taught me lots of skills that are vital in life, such as it made me become a much better speaker, allowing me to spark a conversation with

just about anyone. Overall it was an experience I'll never forget."

—freshman



"I am in charge of taking the contemporary photos during the interviews and scanning most of the historical photos. The past few months I have been working on the staff page and a raffle during our book signing. I have gone to the Oakland and San Francisco meeting with other students to speak to the outside world about our project.

"I lived by a lot of the elders, and I never knew how many great stories they have to offer us. For instance, in the Johnson interview, Mr. Johnson was getting his horse, and the rope cut his finger off. And the next moment his dog ate it. I thought that was pretty gross.

"This book will go on forever, and many people will treasure these stories."

—freshman



"Before *Voices of the Valley*, you could have asked me anything about the old families or the history of our valley. I couldn't have answered you. After the interviews, I learned about the old families that lived on Vinegar Ridge, known today as Signal Ridge, and how the Anderson Valley community came to be. My social skills increased also. I met valley elders that I never knew lived here. I found them all interesting and full of good stories to tell.

"My time on *Voices of the Valley* was not wasted—it went into a great cause. *Voices of the Valley* is something that will be valued by future generations. It will be passed on, so the history of our valley will be known in future years."

—freshman



"This is my first year in *Voices of the Valley*, and I thought it was a pretty interesting class. I got better skills with computers in this class, working with Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Word. One thing I like is that I got to interview the cop who lives in my town. And that was real nice, because I got to know him. I'd recommend this class to anyone who wants to learn about their town's history, the people in the town."

—freshman



"The Pronsolino family is one of the oldest families who still live in the valley. There aren't a lot of younger Pronsolinos left. I will be the last one to graduate from A.V. High. There were stories that my grandparents mentioned that I've heard millions of times, but others were new to me. Creating this book shows me that the stories must be passed on."

—freshman



"I think being on *Voices of the Valley* was a great experience. It gives kids the experience of being around elders and learning certain skills, such as interviewing and editing and all the technology. It's great.

"Personally, my favorite part of the project was meeting new people and talking in front of people. I really liked going to conferences and telling people about our project, because it was amazing how pleased they were with it. That was exciting.

"I think that *Voices of the Valley* is definitely a worthwhile project. It's—as our brochure says—bridging the gap between youth and elders. It's the most valuable type of history, because it's dealing with the real life lessons."

—senior



"I immigrated from Germany to the U.S. several years ago—to be exact it was in November '97. I didn't know what to expect from this so-called land of opportunities. John, Linda, Dorothy, and Perry Hulbert were [some] of the first people we met. We used to be their neighbors and play with their two grandchildren. And I remember quite well how we used to go down to Indian Creek and climb trees, and we used to swim. It was so nice back then—we had no problems and no worries. After a year or so we moved, and gradually but surely our contact with the Hulbert family diminished.

"When I heard Mr. Mendosa give a speech about the oral history class, I immediately signed up. My sister Sarah and I added the Hulberts to the list of possible interviews. We knew that they would have an interesting story to tell. And I realize now that this was a very important choice we made, because it was preserving history in a modern way—and the history of this valley.

"My children and my children's children will probably be able to hear my voice when I was a teenager, and they'll know that I contributed to this valley or community. This is the important part of the project. The typing skills that I received or the technological skills I acquired were just part of the process."

—sophomore

SECTION II

**Llano Grande Center
Edcouch-Elsa High School
Elsa, Texas**

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Oral Histories

Ezequiel Granado 32

Luisa Garza 37

by Daniela Guardiola and Cindy Lee Perez

*All Section II photos courtesy of Llano Grande Center
for Research and Development*

From the Editors

Today, it's hard to imagine that the small, quiet town of Elsa in southeastern Texas was once home to the world's largest broccoli packing plant. But in its heyday during the 1940s and '50s, the Vahl'sing shed, as locals call it, measured a quarter mile long, ran 24 hours a day, and employed thousands, luring Mexicans 15 miles to the south with wages of 75 cents a day.

Though the packing shed has long disappeared and its dusty quarter-mile now stands abandoned, the grandchildren of those workers remain. At Edcouch-Elsa High School, where the Llano Grande Research Center gathers young people to revitalize their Mexican and American communities, students are seeking out and publishing the stories of their elders.

Ezequiel Granado, whose father was a night watchman at the shed, caught the eye of the owner, Mr. Fred Vahl'sing, when still a boy. Over the years he moved up from janitor to payroll clerk to foreman. As his authority grew, so did his desire to treat his fellow workers, mostly Mexicans, with fairness and dignity. He fought for a forty-hour work week, overtime pay, and decent housing. "The whole idea was just to treat them like human beings," he said. "That's all."

One hundred and one-year-old Luisa Garza, who raised six children on her own, sums up her life in a few words: "a lot of work." In addition to her many years in the Vahl'sing packing shed, Luisa's lifelong labor includes working in the cane fields, sewing and ironing clothes, and making and selling tamales, empanadas, and tortillas. "Whatever was asked of me I did," she says. "I was a woman who worked hard to earn my pennies."

To recapture local history largely missing from conventional textbooks, students and staff of the Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, housed at Edcouch-Elsa High School, are conducting and publishing interviews with residents of their Rio Grande Valley community. In addition to conducting, transcribing, and editing interviews, students also collect and archive old photographs from area residents. They publish their final products, together with narratives and reflections from community members, in the *Llano Grande Journal*, available in English and Spanish, in hard copy and on-line (www.esconett.org/llano_grande/). Younger students in many area classrooms now read the Journal's oral histories in their literature courses.

Ezequiel Granado

Ezequiel Granado knew F.H. Vahl'sing when he was but a little boy, and Mr. Vahl'sing knew him. "He called me Zeke," Mr. Granado recalls of his friendly run-ins with Vahl'sing. Mr. Granado was raised in Elsa but moved to Edinburg when he took a job at the Vahl'sing ice plant at the famous "La Hielera."

I was born in Baytown, Texas in 1927 and moved to Elsa in 1928. I lived in Elsa until 1958 when I moved to Edinburg and have lived here since. My father was Albino Granado and mother Sixta Padilla Granado; she was the sister of Arcadio Padilla, who is in his 90s and still lives in Elsa. Both my parents were born in Mexico, Dad in Mexico City, and Mom in Monterrey. They both came to this country as youngsters.

My father's dad got killed in Mexico City when my father was very young. My grandmother then married another fellow. After awhile, she came north and made arrangements to cross through Brownsville. Soon after, she went to see an acquaintance in Houston, but she couldn't take my dad along, so she left him in East Donna with some kinfolk of her friend from Houston. My grandmother promised to come back for him, but other things happened before she did.

The story goes that my father stayed with a man who beat him whenever my father did something wrong. My father was only eight years old. One day when the man sent my dad on an errand to get some smoking tobacco, my father decided not to come back. He actually was going to get the

tobacco, but he first went to some sort of carnival that was in town. Well, he stayed at the carnival too late, and when he realized it was pretty late, he decided he wouldn't return home. Going back home would mean getting beat up pretty badly, of course. So my dad went into the brush instead.

While wandering in the brush, he was found by two Texas Rangers. They started asking him questions and wanted to take him back to where he belonged. He said he didn't want to go back. So one of the Rangers, a fellow named Robert Puckett, asked him, "So what do you want to do?" "I don't know," my dad said. So Ranger Puckett said, "Well, if you don't want to go back home to where you belong, if you ever find your way back, ¿Te quieres ir conmigo?" My dad said, "Yes!" So my father went with Mr. Puckett to his ranch out by Red Gate. Thereafter, the Pucketts raised my father, first in Red Gate, then in the Brownsville area.

Dad left the Brownsville area when he was about 21 or 22. He married my mother about that time, and they moved to Baytown because some kinfolk from Baytown helped my father get a job with Humble Oil Refinery, which later became Exxon. I was born there in '27, but my mother didn't like that area, so they came back to Elsa in '28.

On September 11, 1933, one of the worst storms we've ever seen hit the Valley. Dad had bought a piece of a building from Mrs. Marciana Zavala's parents and attached it to another building Dad

had started to build. Our house was in the area north of the railroad tracks where the Mexican people lived, and it would be a place where many people would stay that night in September. When the storm came, we were out by Mile 17 1/2 picking cotton that had been left over. We noticed some

When the storm came, we were out by Mile 17 1/2 picking cotton that had been left over. We noticed some dark clouds coming but had no idea what was happening. You know there was no media for us in those days, so we had no forewarning.

dark clouds coming but had no idea what was happening. You know there was no media for us in those days, so we had no forewarning.

All of a sudden the storm was here. The Cardozas, the Padillas, and I don't remember who else, but it was quite a few people, they all came to the house that night to seek refuge from the terrible storm. I remember Dad spent all night throwing wires and driving stakes in the ground to keep our house and some of the neighboring houses down.

And across the street Mr. Tomás Castillo, who had a real nice house, took in probably the whole town of Elsa, or at least the Mexican people who didn't trust that their houses would stay up. On the south side of town, of course, the Anglo people stayed in their houses, because many of them had sturdier houses than what we had. Our houses, which were made by Frank Smith, well some were sturdy; even so, many of them just crumbled down during that storm. At the Castillo house some people were taking care of the wounded because some people had head injuries, others had broken legs, and things of that sort. That hurricane was terrible, even bigger and worse than Beulah.

Growing up in Elsa in the 1930s, I always went to school. In fact, I don't even remember when I learned English. I've always known it, since I can remember. I always practiced it. Where I was, there was always English. When I was in school I used English, when I went into the service I used English, and when I was working I had to deal with Anglo people. I went to business school in Weslaco for two years under the GI Bill, got my certificate in 24 months, and of course used English throughout there; this was about '50 or '52. School was in the morning from 7:30 to 12:00 p.m. and in the afternoon we'd work. A bunch of us would drive from Elsa to Weslaco everyday. It was Pablo Ramírez the barber, Adan Pérez, Pedro



Downtown Elsa, Texas, in the 1940s

Salinas, another barber, and myself. We used to drive in a Model A car that I think Pablo had. It was about a 1929 or 1930 model.

When I came out of the service in 1947, I drove trucks for Marvin Nattinger who had contracts with the F.H. Vahl'sing packing shed and with the Bell Brothers' cotton gin in La Villa. I also drove a truck for Charlie Johnston who is from the Pan-chita Ranch Johnstons from La Villa.

In 1948, I started working with Juan Morón, the old man Juan Morón, who had brand new '48 trucks. I hauled cottonseed for him to the Stokes Gin there in Edcouch; old man Apolonio Gutiérrez ran that John Stokes gin. I also worked in the scale house of the gin. Me and Obe Leal, who I played a lot of baseball with, and Oscar Cardoza, who drives a bus for the school district these days, and a bunch of other guys, we used to work the gins. We did that during the cotton season. During the vegetable season, most of the people who worked in cotton then moved on to work for Vahl'sing, myself included.

During the off-season we loved to play baseball. I used to love to travel around the Valley to play ball. We used to go to Alice and all the way south into Mexico. We had a team in Elsa called The Merchants. I played along with Obe Leal and a bunch of other guys. Before The Merchants, Vahl'sing had a team; they called themselves the

Ezequiel Granado *continued*

Bonitas. Hector Salinas, who was the main timekeeper of the shed, and Víctor Zavala were in charge of the team. Hector Salinas, Jr. was the mascot of the team. That's where little Hector got his start. He went on to play baseball at Pan Am and now coaches somewhere in Corpus.

Oh yeah, baseball was a big deal here in the '30s, '40s, and '50s. Teams came down from Austin and even Dallas, but nobody could compete with the Vahl'sing team. They had a real good team. They had a field there south of the Vahl'sing shed around 2nd or 3rd Streets where the housing projects are now. They had bleachers and everything there.

I married in 1951, and we started having kids, and I started working day and night. When I started working here in La Hielera in '54, six months out of the year my average working hours were 21 to 22 hours a day, seven days a week. I don't know how I did it.

La Hielera was built in 1927. It was a very important place for the economy. Back in the late 1930s and into the War years, they used to ship, by rail, 35 to 40 carloads of ice from here to the Vahl'sing shed in Elsa every night to be out there in the morning to be spotted. Each car carried 160 blocks of ice, each block weighing 300 pounds. That's how much ice they needed in the Elsa shed every 24 hours. As you can imagine, most of Vahl'sing's profit was going to the ice plant, but he needed to buy ice to ship fresh vegetables out of Elsa. So he bought the ice plant from the Pacific Fruit Express, I think about 1941. Once he manufactured his own ice, he had everything.

I worked here at La Hielera from 1954 until I retired, and I ran the whole thing for the last 15

to 20 years that I worked there. I was the janitor, timekeeper, foreman, payroll clerk; I did just about everything in that ice plant. I had five million pounds of frozen fruit there on a given day that I was responsible for.

Fred Vahl'sing, Sr.'s vision and good fortune made La Hielera big during the 1940s and '50s. When Vahl'sing first came to the Valley during the late 1920s, his main product was broccoli. He came over at first and bought what became known as Elsa Farms on Mile 6. That's where they grew the first broccoli in this area that was then shipped to New York. The story goes that Fred Vahl'sing himself was on that first train that went from Elsa to New York. He carried a shovel in the train to ice down the vegetables.

I married in 1951, and we started having kids, and I started working day and night. When I started working here in La Hielera in '54, six months out of the year my average working hours were 21 to 22 hours a day, seven days a week. I don't know how I did it.

When I was about five or six years old, Dad was a night watchman at the Vahl'sing shed in Elsa, and I would stay with him overnight sometimes. Mr. Vahl'sing would make periodic trips to Elsa, and I remember seeing him and talking to him while I was there with my dad. He got to know me pretty well; he used to call me Zeke. He treated me like I was one of his sons, because he knew me since I was about six years old. When I started working here in '54, he came by once and he remembered me. Shortly after that, he turned me into assistant manager. He showed a lot of confidence in me. Then one day he said, "Zeke, you are no longer assistant manager, now you're manager of the whole plant." And he told his son Fred Jr., "Fred-dy, you better take care of this man, because he's

been taking care of us for a long time," and that was that. I also told him that I wanted to live in one of the houses on his property. He wound up giving me a house and the land the house was on.



Promoting the Valley

around here tomorrow."

Well, about three days later, Mr. Katzberg called me into his office and says to me, "Zeke, first of all, I want to know if you've forgotten what I've told you?" I said,

"Why?" And he says,

"because I've forgotten what you've told me."

"Well," I said, "it's forgotten." And he stretched out his hand and shook my hand and said, "I want you to be my floor manager. You know, Zeke, as of that day when you and I had that exchange, I've had the best night's sleep of my life. I've been here 27 years, and nobody has ever talked back to me at all.

I had an experience in

November of 1954, an encounter with a fellow named Angus Katzberg, a man who I didn't know. He was, in fact, the manager of the ice plant, but again, I didn't know. Anyway, I was working in the office as a timekeeper. I had gotten that job, because I had worked as a timekeeper for a company in Mercedes, by hand, for 600 employees and had to pay them every week. At the ice plant here, I worked in the office with Mrs. Angie Stewart from Edcouch. She knew what I could do. And one day all the employees were coming in to fill out their W-2 forms. But one fellow forgot to sign his form, so I went out after him. As I went out to catch him, I noticed he was pretty far away, so I whistled at him to stop him so he could come back to sign his form. At that same moment, this big German-looking man turns right around and just cusses me out from top to bottom.

Everybody is always 'yes sir, no sir' but nobody ever stands up for himself. You're the first one who has defended himself against me since I got here. I think I just needed somebody to talk back to me, and you're going to be my man." And I was his man for some 30 years. We turned out to be great friends.

He got really close to me, and I could only see him into his chest area because he was about six and a half feet tall. But whatever he was telling me, I answered him back in the worst language you could imagine—no nice words at all. After we had that really heated exchange, he turned right around and waved a trailer to come into the dock. My whistle, you see, had stopped a trailer this man had been waving in. It was all just an accident. I went pale back into the office, fuming. As soon as I stepped inside Bobby Burns says to me, "Zeke, do you know who that man you were fighting with is? He's Angus Katzberg, the vice president of the company." "Well," I said to them, "I may not be

You understand that the people Mr. Katzberg was talking about were mostly Mexican people who wouldn't dare answer back at him because they feared for their jobs, and often times for their



The Vahl'sing packing shed

Ezequiel Granado *continued*

homes, too. Many of the workers came from Mexico and lived in the little houses provided by the company. People just took it, even when they were treated like something pretty close to slaves. I changed all of that when I became manager of this place. I told the workers they had to get out of the labor camp they were in and go look for a small property close by that they could call their own. I told them I was going to tear all those little shacks down so none of them would remain dependent on that terrible housing. "Work hours are going to be fairer; you'll only work from eight to four o'clock," I said. "I might need you at two

in the morning, but I'll pay you overtime for every hour you work after four in the afternoon." I told Mr. Katzberg I was going to do all that if I was going to run that place. I guaranteed him that we'd get more production from people if we worked them only 40 hours per week and paid them overtime when they came in after four. And Mr. Katzberg agreed. And we did get much more production.

The whole idea was just to treat people with dignity, just to treat them like human beings. That's all.

I guaranteed him that we'd get more production from people if we worked them only 40 hours per week and paid them overtime when they came in after four. And Mr. Katzberg agreed. And we did get much more production. The whole idea was just to treat people with dignity, just to treat them like human beings.

Luisa Garza

by Daniela Guardiola and Cindy Lee Perez

Luisa Garza, a 101-year-old Elsa resident, was interviewed at the Con Cariño Adult Day Care Center in Elsa, Texas, by Daniela Guardiola and Cindy Lee Perez, students in Delia Perez's sophomore World History class at Edcouch-Elsa High School.

My name is Luisa Garza. I am 101 years old. Don't even ask me when I was born because I can't remember. You can tell me something and if I turn around, I forget everything. I don't have my faculties like I did before.

I have lived in Rio Grande City, Beeville, Alice, Mercedes, Chicago, and here in Elsa, Texas. All the towns I lived in, I have worked in. I worked at sewing. I would make dresses for brides and ladies. Now I can't. I can't do it. There were only three in my family, one son and two daughters. The oldest doesn't know anything. She is like me. She can't walk, she doesn't come often to see me at my house. But we take care of ourselves. I learned that from my father and my mother. Because we were many and only one of my parents was the worker—that was my father. My mother could not work, because she had so many in the family to take care of. How was she supposed to work?

We were very poor. I'm still poor. Just imagine. We were five boys and seven girls for one worker. How do you think he raised us? I've always been poor. My parents, Bernabé Fuentes and Dionicia Hernández, were always poor. And we were many. The only schooling we got was in the fields. That was the school that our parents made us go to. We cut cane, corn, we fished, we did everything ourselves. That was the school where I learned. When I

The only schooling we got was in the fields. That was the school that our parents made us go to. We cut cane, corn, we fished, we did everything ourselves.

was growing up, things that we have today didn't even exist. There were no doctors, there were no priests, and there was no church. There was nothing. It was all work.

I had six children, three lived, three died. My husband worked when he felt like it. He was lazy when it came to work. When I had just had my last girl, my husband went to Mexico with his cousin, and he never returned. The kids were very young when my husband left me. He left me when I was still very innocent. He never returned, and I struggled to finish raising my children. I haven't needed a man since my husband left. Besides, nowadays there are no real men left.

In those days, when the cotton season was over, the owners did not want old cotton sacks that were torn. The torn ones they burned. I would follow the truck and take the torn sacks home and sew them up and paint them and make clothes for my children. I would go and put little pieces of a plant in the water with the sacks to color them. You put the sacks in a tub of water with the plants, and it would color them.

I raised my children in La Villa. Lots of people there knew I did a lot of things. Whatever was asked of me I did. I made tamales, empanadas, and tortillas, and my youngest child would go out on the streets and sell so that I could feed them and dress them. There in La Villa, I had a lot of female friends that helped me support my family. And then my children got married, and I went back to work in the packing shed. Then my son, the only one I have, moved my house from La Villa to Elsa, so I could be close to work.

I never went anywhere. I didn't have time to go out or have friends. How could I? If sometimes I went out with a friend, I

would look for something for my daughters, so they could eat and dress. I was never a crazy woman. There were crazy women, but I

wasn't one of them. I never left my children alone so I could be in the streets. Now that I'm old, I'm finally getting money. And now I'm waiting for some men to fix my house, because my house is too broken down. I have suffered too much.

I worked in Chicago for many years, but I also worked in the fields for many more years. I worked at the Vahl'sing packing shed when it was just starting. We started when it was just a canvas tent. I worked there for years. Then they brought all the machines. From there on, they kept bringing machines everyday and putting canvas on top. So when it rained, we worked under the canvas.

One time the Border Patrol came to the Vahl'sing shed and took most of the workers. Only four of us were left. All the rest were sent back to Mexico because they were from Mexico. But in the morning they had all returned. The Border Patrol would just leave them there on the bridge on the other side. But they just crossed over.

I stopped working at the shed because we were told that it was going to close down. The reason that the shed closed was because the main owner died. He left it with another man, and he let it go. He didn't pay, and then he began to allow this and that to happen and the shed finally closed. When the shed closed, the company sold all the machines and the tools to Mexico. We suffered because we couldn't earn money. I cried when I heard the packing shed was going to close. I cried, because I did not know what we were going to do.

One of the owners of the shed was a very good man. He is the one who got me my Social Secu-

I cried when I heard the packing shed was going to close. I cried, because I did not know what we were going to do.

rity number. But then one day a woman said they didn't need any more employees. And they told me there was no work. And then I

asked the man, "What am I going to do? I don't have a husband that can help me. If there is no work, what am I going to do?" And they said they couldn't give me a job because I was too old. I said, "Okay, so what am I to do? I don't know any other jobs, just the fields. I can't go to the office and ask for a job because I'm not smart." That's what I thought.

They kept telling me I was too old. But I could still peel tomatoes and put them in buckets. You had to do five buckets in about an hour, but I would fill five buckets in a half-hour. I told the man, "You can't find someone to fill five buckets and you want to let me go. I can fill the buckets." He said, "No Luisa, it's the law. It is the law and you're too old, and if you hurt yourself we will have to pay for everything." He was the one who got me my Social Security number.

My life has been a lot of work. I thank God because I have never been sick. I was never sick. Even when it was cold outside, I would be in the fields. Everyone would come in if it rained. I would stay out there. I would cover myself with a piece of plastic and continue working.

There are a lot of people here who know my life and how I raised my children. And I thank God that my daughters didn't become bad. No, they didn't leave me. I took care of them with my sweat and theirs as well. How did I do it? Well, by working. I worked by ironing clothes, by making tortillas and tamales; I made them all. I was a woman who worked hard to earn my pennies. Each month I made two or three dollars from tortillas and empanadas. But it was something for me so I could feed my children.

SECTION III

Mariposa Middle School

Mariposa, California

From the Editors 41

Oral History

75 Cents a Day Down in the Pollywoods:

Memories of Lois Moseley 42

by Justina Crisp, Crystina Foley, and Allison Rust

*All Section III photos courtesy of Mariposa Middle School
and Marla Edwards*

From the Editors

When Lois Moseley was 12 years old, she asked her sister to help roll up a mattress. Her sister volunteered to do "the grunting," leaving Lois to handle "the pushing." After two unsuccessful attempts, her sister suggested, "Try again. I'll grunt a little harder, and you lift a little harder." So as her sister grunted, Lois explains, "I lifted it and ran at her with it and rammed her. She fell and sat under that mattress screaming. You would've thought it killed her."

Lois Moseley recounts for her great granddaughter and two other seventh graders at the Mariposa Middle School—girls just the age of Lois at the time of the mattress-ramming—memories that span nearly 90 years. Whether her ill-fated first week of school or her days as a truck driver, Lois retells them in stunning clarity.

Vivid details radiate humor and candor. "When our first little girl was born," Lois recalls, "she had real curly hair and was just as cute as she could be. But our second little girl came, and she had about six stringy white hairs on her head; she looked just like a skinned rabbit."

Lois shares a reflective side, too. A religious woman, she attends church regularly—but she goes on Saturdays. "I studied the Bible and studied, and you know, there is no place in the Bible where it says for us to go to church on Sunday."

Some folks just know how to tell a story. Lois Moseley is one of them.

In April 1999, seventh-grade students in teacher Marla Lynch Edwards' language arts classes published *Memories of Blue Skies and Butterflies: Oral Histories of Long-time Mariposa Residents*. The 12- and 13-year-old Mariposa middle schoolers arranged, conducted, videotaped, transcribed, revised, and edited interviews of 33 area residents. They gathered photographs and wrote introductory and concluding descriptions of their elder and themselves. They created story titles and determined the point of view for their entries; some are first-person accounts told by the interviewee, others are third-person narrations of the elder's life. Students in art teacher Caro Medeghini's class illustrated the 300-page, yearbook-size volume.



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75 Cents a Day Down in the Pollywoods: Memories of Lois Moseley

by Justina Crisp (great granddaughter), Crystina Foley, and Allison Rust

Still very active at the age of 86, Lois Parrat Moseley is determined to make life the best it can be. Born July 23, 1912, she has lived through the Depression, was probably the first woman to earn her commercial and chauffeur's license in New Mexico, and moved from her birthplace in Louisiana all the way to the small town of Mariposa, California.

The walls of her home are adorned with paintings that tell a story or show a place of specific importance in her life. Among those pictures are ones showing her considerably large family.

Her tall, youthful and strong, able-bodied figure belies her age. This body has been with her through her many careers, hard times, sad times, and blithesome times.

I was born in Louisiana down in the pollywoods on July 23, 1912. I lived as a child in east Texas until the age of 16, and we moved to the Panhandle of Texas, past Amarillo. I had ten brothers and sisters, and we all outlived our parents.

I started school in Supret Bluff, Texas. My dad made it hard on me before I started school. He told me if anybody called me a liar to slap the stuffin' out of them. Well, the first week of school we was outside with the teacher, all in a circle holding hands. The teacher came around namin' us a vegetable. Well, she

named me bean and the little girl next to me pea. Well, this little girl said, "What's your name?"

I said, "Bean."

And she said, "It isn't. Your name's pea, and my name's bean."

I said, "My name is bean."

She said, "Well, you're just a liar."

I grabbed her by the hair and slapped her. I had on a new dress that my mother made for school, and she tore the collar off that dress. Well, anyway, I had a time in my first year of school.

Oh, let's see now, my best memory. My best was when we were on a train, and my uncle was leaving for World War I. We went 250 miles to see our uncle before he left. The butcher boy came around with candy and grapes, and Daddy got us all candy. I thought it was the best stuff. That trip was the best of my memories.

[I also remember] my grandfather—I was the oldest grandchild, so he took me early in the morning—and he and I went to the woods. He killed a wild hog, so we came back home, and he harnessed up a mule and took a sled. He let me ride on the sled, and we went to get the hog. We



Lois Moseley

got to the hog, and the mule wouldn't go close to that dead hog. My grandfather wore a vest all the time, so he took the vest off and stuck the mule's ears through the arms. The mule couldn't see, so he backed the mule up and rolled the hog on the sled and set me up a-straddle that dead hog and home we went.

I had real good parents. My mother, it doesn't hurt her to grab me and spank me, but my dad never did spank me but twice, and I didn't even deserve it either time.

[The first time] one of my little brothers were born, and my mother was in the bed. Well, the next day my daddy got up and he made biscuits and gravy, eggs and what all for breakfast. While he was making the gravy, Mother called him. He went to see what she wanted. Well, the gravy burnt, and he didn't know it, so he finished and put the milk in. I got to the table, and he put my biscuit and gravy on my plate, and he went to see Mother. I took one bite, and it wasn't what I wanted. It was horrible.

He came back, and he said, "You haven't took a bite. Tell me why you haven't eaten your biscuits and gravy?" And I plainly said, "Because it isn't fit for a dog to eat!" He whapped my rear. That was the first one. I told the truth, and I didn't need it. The truth wasn't nice, but I didn't need that.

The next time he got me was when I was twelve years old. I was tall and skinny as a rail, but it was I had a terrible chill that morning, and I was sick and a temperature and everything. A cloud came up late afternoon, and my dad he looked in the little room I was in, and he said, "You get up and go out, and you and your sister bring the mattress in." My mother had it out on the porch outside. "It's goin' to rain," he said. "Go on now."

We went horseback riding, and we would go hay riding. A whole bunch of us would get up on [a wagon] and ride around the country singin' songs and playin' music. And we didn't have to pay for it. You know, we had a lot more fun than they have now.

So I got up and went out there to the mattress. My sister was little, younger than I was, and so I rolled up the mattress. You take a mattress in those days, and it was hard to roll up. I got a hold of it, and she was standin' on the porch. We had a big long porch. I said, "Come over here and help me."

She said, "I can help you right here. I'll do the gruntin' and you do the pushin'." Well, I lifted it, and it didn't help me one bit, her standin' there with her hands on her hips gruntin'. She said, "Try again. I'll grunt a little harder, and you lift a little harder." So she grunted, and I lifted it and ran at her with it and rammed her. She fell. It came on top of her and plopped out. I went in the house. Well, I reckon my daddy got me again. My sister sat under that mattress screaming. You would've thought it killed her. We all thought she'd died. Well, anyways, I got it again. Both the times my daddy got me, I didn't need any one of them.

I liked to play music, a little piano but mostly guitar. Violin a little bit, but I mainly picked the guitar. Oh, we did a lot of things for fun. We went horseback riding, and we would go hay riding. A whole bunch of us would get up on [a wagon] and ride around the country singin' songs and playin' music. And we didn't have to pay for it. You know, we had a lot more fun than they have now.

One night we went to this people's house, and the lady that lived there said, "No dancing in this house. No way we'd have dancing in this house. No way, no dancing." And so this young man that I was with, you know, Chet Atkin's brother, went to this lady and said, "Do you mind if we play Lightning in here?"

Lois Moseley *continued*

She said, "I don't believe I've ever seen Lightning be played before."

He said, "Well, you just wait and watch and see." I happened to have my guitar in the car, and two or three other guys did, too. So we got our music and sat down. We went to playing, and people started square dancing. Finally [Chet Atkin's brother] went over and said, "What do you make about that?"

And she said, "Why haven't I heard about that? Why haven't I heard about Lightnin' before? I think that is just a fantastic game." And it was square dancing!

The first time I ever got out on my own was when I got married, and I was so lonely. But I knew that that's what we's supposed to do. It was hard times. He went to work, my husband, from sun to sun, for three quarters a day, for seventy-five cents a day. I went to work, that's what I got. We lived out on a—well, they called it a ranch. It was nothin' in the world but a farm. We raised cotton and corn and feed, just all kinds of things.

We traded my guitar for an oil stove to start keeping house with. Needless to say, that ended my music career. We traded my ring for Lou Atkin's cow, and I don't know what for a gun.

We traded my guitar for an oil stove to start keeping house with. Needless to say, that ended my music career. We traded my ring for Lou Atkin's cow, and I don't know what for a gun. He ended up trading everything I owned away. Anyway, all of that year we lived on seventy-five cents a day when we worked; sometimes we didn't.

When it came harvest time, he was driving a tractor for seventy-five cents a day, while I went to pick cotton, twill cotton. I got thirty-five cents a hundred pounds. Takes a lot of cotton to make a hundred pounds. I didn't go home every night until I had a thousand; that is three dollars and fifty cents. Together we made four dollars and twenty-five cents, and we almost got rich because nobody made that much a day.

We was married two years, and we had a little girl. She was the cutest little girl and everybody in our family just loved her to death. I don't believe I would know how to describe it, but for instance, I remember she was walking good at two years old.

Our second little girl was born August 22, 1935. When our first little girl was born, she had real curly hair and was just as cute as she could be. But our second little girl came, and she had about six stringy white hairs on her head; she looked just like a skinned rabbit. She was everything but a pretty baby, everything but a pretty baby. But she was a very brilliant baby, just brilliant. Just real little.

Then three years later we had another little girl, Wilma Rae. She was just one of the best behaved little girls I had ever seen. When she got big enough to sit by herself, I would sit her on the floor on a blanket and give her a jar lid and a man's hanky, and she would have such a good little time. When she was a four-month-old baby, she weighed ten pounds. The day she was one year old she weighed forty pounds! She did not like a lot of exercise. She would lay down and stick her feet up in the air and just sit there and play with something.

All three were good little girls. No troubles, never any troubles from those little girls. No teachers ever called me but one time. So I guess we lucked out and had three wonderful girls.

I didn't do very much during World War I. World War II came, and my husband joined the Navy. I got me a job as a nurse's aide at the Veterans Hospital and worked there

for a long, long time. I had me two jobs. I worked in the hospital, and then one day I went to the filling station to put gas in the car. Mr. Hadley was in at the station, and he said, "Can you drive a truck?"

I said, "Yes, I can." I don't know, I thought I could.

He said, "Why don't you go down and get your chauffeur's license?"

I already had my commercial license. So he said, "Get in this truck with me, and we will take a ride." He got me to drive, and then he said, "I want you to drive this truck full of gas." And I said, "I can't quit my job," and he said that it would only be three nights a week. So I went 220 miles one way [to] Artusia with a two-tanker oil truck.

One night I was on open range (there were no fences), when I was coming back in the oil truck. The whole country was up one hill and down the other. I was going down this really long hill, and there was a whole bunch of cows in the road, in the highway. And so I honked my horn and honked my horn, they all got out except for one. This one just barely got out of the way before I hit it. There was no way I could stop that two-tanker truck that was full of gas. When I got home, back to the station, I told Mr. Hadley, "I can't go on any more. My husband is overseas, my three daughters is home with a babysitter. If I had hit and if something would have happened to their daddy overseas, they wouldn't have anybody." So I told him I couldn't make any more trips.

I really did good drivin' that taxi. I do believe I was the first woman in New Mexico to get a chauffeur's license and commercial license.

That ended my truck driving, but then I started driving a taxi at night and working at the hospital in the day. I drove a taxi two years in Santa Fe. I made good

money, and I hauled a lot of movie stars; they would give good tips. I really did good drivin' that taxi. I do believe I was the first woman in New Mexico to get a chauffeur's license and commercial license.

After that I quit the Veterans Hospital, and I went to work in a maternity hospital. I think that was my very favorite job. I also worked at Savemore; I was the head checker. I really liked that. And I worked in a huge drug store in Dallas, Texas. I liked that one, too. I liked all my jobs that I couldn't have gone back done it again.

I love Mariposa. We have been in 42 states in the world, and nothing is as good as Mariposa. I've lived in Dallas. I've lived in Salfon, New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mariposa, though, is still my favorite.

I go to church every single week unless something happens. Of course, I am different than most people. I go to church on Saturday. I studied the Bible and studied, and you know, there is no place in the Bible where it says for us to go to church on Sunday. It mentions the first day of the week eight times in the Bible. Though never, not one time, did it say to go to church on a Sunday. Well, if He left us an example, why don't we go on Saturday? I found out that 321 years after Jesus was crucified, the Catholics made it Sunday. I never miss going to church. Yet, I'm different from all of my family. As a matter of fact, they all think I've lost my mind.

I think that it is real important that parents teach their children about God. I think that our world is

I feel sorry for teenagers today, because they are big enough, yet they're not yet old enough. Let's put it that way. You know they're too young to do and say what they really want to, but they're too old to be a child. My grandma used to say that they are "betwixt and between."

so mixed up. I think that young people really don't know what to do with themselves. Teenagers just have my heart. Yes, my heart goes out to all teenagers because they have nothing to do. I feel sorry for teenagers today, because they are big enough, yet they're not yet old enough. Let's put it that way. You know they're too young to do and say what they really want to, but they're too old to be a child. My grandma used to say that they are "betwixt and between." So, yes, my heart goes out to teenagers.

Let me tell you what, I have been a eyewitness to the police. Their eyes are glued to teenagers and old white-headed people. They don't even watch the middle age people; they just go off and do anything. But the cops got their eye on teenagers and old people. Why don't they watch them all?

Everhow, I think that the world today is a good place to be in. My husband is the most important person in my life, I guess. We've been with each other for almost 67 years, so that makes him the most important person in my life. All three of my daughters are very important, too, so is my son-in-laws. My grandchildren and my great grandchildren are very important, too. I care about my neighbors, and I care about those people in these floods. My heart goes out to the children, little children and older children. I just the other day in town saw two little kids that looked like they had been pushed around and mistreated. I just thought I could take them home with me. I have had 22 foster children and three girls that were so good.

The advice that I would give to you is the same that was given to me. It is to be honest and don't ever tell a story and tell the truth and consider other people before you. Friendship, kindness and

honesty are very important. I remember when I broke my hip this room was full of flowers and get well cards. I'm sure you could have not fit one more flower in this room.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alison Rust is a kind, athletic 13-year-old girl. She loves sports and was on the softball team for three years. She is a friendly and well-mannered seventh grader attending Mariposa Middle School. She lives just outside of Midpines and has played piano for six years. She loves to read and write and be with people. She hopes you enjoy the interview as much as she did.

Crystina R. Foley is 13 years old and attends Mariposa Middle School as a seventh grader. She resides at her home in the hills of Mariposa. Crystina enjoys riding her horse Brandy, playing basketball, swimming, and going riding on her mountain bike. Her pets are: a puppy, a cat, two horses, and two little brothers. She enjoys reading almost anything and likes to write poems. She had fun learning about the well-remembered history of her interviewee.

Justina R. Crisp is an energetic 13-year-old who loves to talk and be with her friends. She is in seventh grade and goes to the Mariposa Middle School. Her friends assure her there is never a dull moment when she's around. She enjoys dancing and music. This project was fun, and she is going to remember this educational interview with her great-grandma.

SECTION IV

Rocky Gap High School

Rocky Gap, Virginia

From the Editors 49

Oral Histories:

*Walking in the Dark: Jim Lundy Reflects on
What the Mountain Knows* 50
by Nate Lundy

Ray Alfred Dent 52
Interview by Paul Hull and Matthew Dent

*All Section IV photos courtesy of Bland County
History Archives/Rocky Gap High School*

From the Editors

“I saw something that made me wonder about our world,” Jim Lundy tells his sixteen-year-old son about a night he’ll never forget in the moonlit woods of Rocky Gap, Virginia. “It’s like I discovered something that’s hard to put into words.”

Unlike Jim’s, most of the 320 stories in the Bland County Archives, collected since 1993 by students at Rocky Gap High School, detail the ordinary happenings of everyday life in the small farms and mines, timber companies and railroads in this corner of Appalachia.

Ray Alfred Dent, for example, describes childhood times when boys hunted groundhog, swung on trees, “fell in rock piles, got tire up.” And in those days, he explains, “if we called anyone by their name like yawl call me Ray, why, they would whup us for it.”

What Jim Lundy saw in the mountain woods one night, however, is more a scene from the future than of distant days gone by. The extraordinary sight, he maintains, may have as much to do

with the mindset of the viewer as with the mysteries of Appalachia. “Being alone in thought brings wisdom—not because you wish it so but because your mind is open to receive.”

Maintained by students at Rocky Gap High School, the Bland County History Archives contain 80 cemetery catalogs, 320 interviews, 700 scanned photographs, plus maps and other artifacts. The Archives began in 1993 as an optional project in junior-year American history classes, with the goal of preserving the unique stories of the area’s Appalachian residents. Several years later, educators saw an opportunity to integrate computer technology with the history curriculum in a meaningful way; the Local History and Technology class was initiated specifically to manage and organize the Archive website. American history students continue to generate the on-line content (oral histories, photos, cemetery catalogs), which grows steadily. The Archives won Best School Resource Site in Virginia for 1996 from the Virginia Society for Technology in Education. Visit the award-winning website at: www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/gap.html.



Walking in the Dark: Jim Lundy Reflects on What the Mountain Knows

by Nate Lundy

Jim: I guess it was around the year 1975, about twenty years ago. I saw something that made me wonder about our world.

I was raised in these mountains. [My] childhood, really my home, was the woods and the hollows, running up and down Round Mountain and Brushy Mountain and what they call the old Indian hunting grounds, in Hunting Camp Creek. I sometimes think that growing up like this makes a person different, in ways of thought, in what one thinks is wisdom, and what is not.

I think we may have lost a lot when we thought we were gaining, and it's disturbing to think, "What if I am right?"

We let machines do our thinking now, and we think we're advanced, but are we really? Are we losing more knowledge than we can ever hope to regain?

Let me give you an example: for many years I ran the mountains hunting for wild ginseng. Then I got to where I could sense its presence nearby without even knowing it was there. The secret was I really wasn't thinking about it. It's just like, it came to me that it was in the next hollow, and I'd walk in the next hollow and it would be there. And it was like it didn't surprise me any, that it was there, you understand? It's like the game we sometimes play, picking the aces out of four or even five different cards. If you think about it, you will never get the right card, but if you'll just let

your hand pick up the card, it seems like your hand knows which card is the right one.

We let machines do our thinking now, and we think we're advanced, but are we really? Are we losing more knowledge than we can ever hope to regain? You know, it's interesting. In the Bible it says that with just a little faith, you can move a mountain. Could there be more there in anything than we could ever dream?

You know, they say we only use a small fraction of our brain, and are we trying every day to use less. What I'm trying to say is maybe your mind has to be tuned to accept knowledge, like you program a computer for it to work. You may not be able to see things if your mind is a blank screen.

That night, alone in the mountains—and I love to be alone in the mountains. Sometimes, many times, I'd walk without the aid of a flashlight, but that all started mainly because back then I could not afford a good light. Then when I had a good light, I turned it off. You understand what I'm saying? It's like I discovered something that's hard to put into words. Anyway, I was walking back through the woods from a long hunting night.

Nate: What were you hunting?

Jim: Raccoons. And I had two hounds, two good dogs, and I don't think we caught any thing that night, and it really didn't matter—it was just getting out in the mountains. It was thinking time, an escape. All of the sudden, the surrounding area was lit up by a dim blue light with a glow like, and I looked up and saw what I thought was a small moon. It was just at the crest of the moun-

tain, like it had just risen from the hidden valley. It was what we called Cove Creek, and there were no roads or anything leading to it. I looked up at what appeared to be a round sphere, and then slowly, it went back down behind the ridge—like it didn't want me to see it, or made a mistake. I got the impression it was waiting for me to leave. I just smiled to myself and went on home. Years went by before I would even speak about things like that. But somehow I feel like I know something that I don't know I know, if you can understand that.

Being alone in
thought brings wisdom—not because
you wish it so but
because your mind is
open to receive...

Being alone in thought brings wisdom—not because you wish it so but because your mind is open to receive, or tuning in on the right channel to pick up something.

I never saw the light again. I never looked for it. Many other things I've seen, but some are not to be talked about. I seem to have an inner thought that all is well, and all will be well in the end.

Ray Alfred Dent

Matthew: This is Paul Hull and Matthew Dent, and today we will be interviewing Ray Alfred Dent at his home in Bastian. Uh, how are you doing today, Ray?

Ray: Awl, doing pretty good.

Matthew: So, can you tell us something about your life?

Ray: Yeah, I told you, but you didn't have the tape on. *(Laughs)*.

Matthew: Okay, so where and when were you born?

Ray: October 27, 1921 in Elgood, West Virginia. Mercer County.

Matthew: Who was you mother and father?

Ray: Frank and Jenny Dent.

Matthew: What were they like?

Ray: They were just parents like any other.

Matthew: Do you have any fond memories of them you would like to share with us?

Ray: Oh, I have a lot of memories, but I don't—I'd rather not go into it. It wasn't that they wasn't good, you know, but they're just some others.

Matthew: Oh, I understand. Do you remember anything about your grandparents?

Ray: My Grandpa Wade, yeah, I remember him and my Grandpa Dent, too. He was a Cherokee

My sister had an old 4 ten [shotgun]. She shot a snake crawling up the wall behind the wallpaper and killed it. Some women are afraid of a gun. She wasn't.

Indian, my Grandpa Dent was.

Matthew: Well, what about your brothers and sisters?

Ray: Well, I had one, two, three brothers that was in the service. And I never was in. I didn't pass. And my sister is married and got some kids, lives in Elgood. The only one that I got left. My sister had an old 4 ten [shotgun]. She shot a snake crawling up the wall behind the wallpaper and killed it. Some women are afraid of a gun. She wasn't.



The Dry Fork school house, circa 1910.

Paul: What were some of the things you done as a boy growing up?

Ray: Well, like I said, groundhog hunt. On a Sunday, we'd groundhog hunt, and the weekday, we cut wood or shucked corn or done a little bit of everything.

Paul: Did you have any games or hobbies you liked to play?

Ray: Well, just we played fox and goose, like I told you, where you had to keep the geese away from the fox, so he couldn't eat them all.

Matthew: So who played the fox most of the time?

Ray: Well, the corn or buttons or whatever we was a-using was the goose, and the old fox, he was different, you know, maybe a red button or so, odd to the rest.

Matthew: Any other games you played?

Ray: Yeah, we got out and swing trees over and broke 'em down. Fell in rock piles. Got tore up. Ride bicycles. And we traded a lot. Traded a bunch of old guns and dogs and stuff for an old car one time, an old-timey Whippet. One of these real old ones. And we got that thing out and took the motor out of it. We would drive it up on the hill and ride it back down. And then we would push it back up and ride it down again. That was a lot of fun back then. And we would get a little ol' hub off a wagon or something and roll it around with a piece of wire—yawl have probably done that. And we would do that all day, and then when they said, "Yawl come in here and do something," we was too tired.

Matthew: Okay, what about chores around the house?

Ray: Well, I had to help my mother a whole lot, and I used to cook a lot. I still cook, but not like I used to. I used to make pies and cakes and everything. And I wasn't no expert on it or nothing, but everybody enjoyed eating them.

Matthew: Did yawl have a lot of money coming in?

Ray: Huh? Uh no, no money hardly. Money, you had to get out and work at something to make it. I think I worked out, I believe it was six dollars a-working. And that was the most money I ever had.

And I went and bought me a pair of shoes, a pair of overalls, and a shirt with six dollars and had money left. You see how cheap stuff was then. And a cowboy hat like he's got would be maybe fifty cents or something. Where did he get a hat like that anyhow?

Matthew: Western Stores mostly.

Paul: Did you go to school? What grade did you go to?

Ray: I went to Elgood School. I think I quit in the fifth grade. I had to quit and help raise the rest of the kids. There was eight—eleven, ten in our family.

Paul: Did yawl have a farm?

Ray: Yeah, we live on a farm. We had eggs, chickens and hogs and an ol' mule to work.

Paul: What about courting back in your day? Did you have a lot of girlfriends?

Ray: Uh, no. I was afraid of girls. When I was about 16 or 17, you may not believe it, if I was walking down the road and a girl come along, I got on the other side.

Everyone laughs.

Paul: When did you move to Bland County?

Ray: About 44 years ago.

I was afraid of girls. When I was about 16 or 17, you may not believe it, if I was walking down the road and a girl come along, I got on the other side.

Paul: What was Bland County like back then?

Ray: Ghost town. All that stuff at Bland where Scott Place was at was a Muncy's old-timey drug store.

Ray Alfred Dent *continued*

Matthew: So when you got married—when, how was that?

Ray: Oh, it was fine. I worked hard, and she worked. And if one got in before the other, why, we would always fix supper for them.

Paul: What kind of jobs did you hold for Bland County?

Ray: Well, I worked at the saw mill, for C and A Lumber Company.

Matthew: Do you remember anything about Virginia hardwood?

Ray: Yeah, I worked there tipping lumber. They would hand it to me, and I had to tip it over to the man on the stack.

Matthew: Was that hard work?

Ray: Good gracious, yeah, it is hard.

Paul: Do you remember any musicians or anything like that traveled through Bastian?

Ray: Well, no, not really. Why, did your grandpa say he remembered some?

Paul: No, I was just wondering.

Ray: Oh, they was a lot of people, older people, that played music, you know. My mom played a banjo all the time, one of these old-timey ones. We killed a groundhog and tan him and put a head on that ol' banjo off a groundhog hide. That was a lot of fun.

We got out and hunt polecats a lot, you know. And when you go to school and got around that old pot-belly stove, they say them Dents have



Moonshiners in the 1930s-40s up Clear Fork.

been hunting skunks again. But you could take one old polecat and make two or three dollars. That was two or three days' work, about 30 hours' work, to get three dollars.

Matthew: Since you were talking about school, do you have an interesting story about that?

Ray: Well, yeah. We used to have a teacher would try to make us sit in the school. And somebody would stick a pin in one, and they

would start a hollering.

Matthew: What did you eat for lunch back then at school?

Ray: Just whatever I had. Milk and bread. One of these gallon buckets, two or three of us ate out of it. So one morning, we got up and in a hurry to go. We had to walk to school about two miles. And we got up and took Mom's shortening in place of lunch. She said, "I bet yawl had a good lunch." I said, "I bet you didn't have no shortening."

Matthew: You told me something about Smokey Bear one time. Do you remember?

Ray: I played Smokey Bear when I worked in the Forestry. I played at the school. That was fun, but that bear suit was hot. It burnt me up nearly. I scared Larry Hagan half to death. He ran and jumped up on the teacher's lap. They try to look around and figure out who it was, but they couldn't see. Then I rode the truck down through Wytheville throwing out candy for the kids. I had a good time on that forestry job.

Matthew: Well, Poppaw, is there anything else

you would like to share with us?

Ray: Well, what kind of more questions do you got?

Paul: How has Bland County changed over the years, for the good or bad?

Ray: Oh, it's changed for the good, Bland County has. Everything is different.

Matthew: What about the respect? How did yawl see older folks back when you were smaller?

Ray: Well, if we called anyone by their name like yawl call me Ray, why, they would whup us for it. Said always call them Mister or Aunt or say Yes, Ma'am and No, Ma'am. Don't ever sass no old people. Seventy-nine years old. How old is your grandpa?

Paul: About 73 or 75. Between that.

Matthew: What about your religion? Can you tell us anything about your preferred religion?

Ray: Oh, yeah, since I been serving the Lord, I've had more enjoyment out of life. If it hadn't been for God, I wouldn't have even been here. Been in so many cars wrecks, I am pretty near afraid to get in a car.

Matthew: Before you were a Christian, what kind of life style did you have?

Ray: A dog's life.

Matthew: Can you explain what a dog's life would probably be like?

Ray: A dog would have a better life than I did. That

is one of the parts I didn't want to go into. I used to be pretty bad to drink, but you wouldn't believe that.

Matthew: Definitely not. Did your drinking habit ever get you in trouble?

Ray: Ooh, Lord, a lot of times. Yeah, the ground would fly up and hit you in the face and everything, or you thought it did. Robert is a laughing. He knows about it. He probably took a sup or two and couldn't see where he is a going.

Everyone laughs.

Matthew: You said some of your brothers went into the service, didn't you?

Ray: Yeah, Jimmy, he got shot up in the war. Charles was in the Navy, and Roy was in the Army.

Matthew: Is your brother James still living?

Ray: No, he's been dead for a long time. His wife married again. He died with cancer, and my mother died with cancer. I had cancer. The Lord healed me.

Matthew: The Lord healed you?

Ray: And I had cataracts in my eyes. He healed that, too. Then my back—had to wear one of these old big corsets on me to keep from having

an operation. You might have heard of the doctor, old Dr. Rob. I'll say your grandpa probably knows him.

Paul: Probably.

Ray: He was the wickedest

But if you was to have
two days to live, he would
have told you about it,
not like some of them
would kindly sugar coat
it, what I call it.

Ray Alfred Dent *continued*

man that ever was. But if you was to have two days to live, he would have told you about it, not like some of them would kindly sugar coat it, what I call it.

They say, "you get weaker and wiser." But I can't see that part. You might get weaker, but then the wise part, I don't know. See, some people go into something that they know good and well gonna

get them in trouble. That's not being wise is it, Paul?

Paul: No.

Matthew: Well, thank you.

Ray: You're welcome.

SECTION V

Sand Rock High School

Leesburg, Alabama

Flambeau School District

Rusk County, Wisconsin

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Selected Oral Histories:

Excerpts from Sand Rock High School's
Sunup 'til Sundown 60

Excerpts from Flambeau's *Celebrating
the Pioneering Spirit* 65

*All Section V photos courtesy of Celebrating the
Pioneer Spirit, Flambeau School District*

From the Editors

Reflecting a somewhat different approach, the following two collections—featuring Depression-era Alabama cotton farmers and their dairy counterparts in Wisconsin—contain shorter excerpts from a greater number of elders. In their brevity, these selections accentuate all the appealing aspects of oral history:

- *vivid details of a different time and way of life:*

They had a telephone line, I reckon...the safest way to get your message through was to put somebody on a mule and send them down the road to tell it.

We did our own yards and there wasn't grass on them then...and we swept the yards with what you call brush brooms...really it was dogwood. We wouldn't dare bother a dogwood now, but it was full of dogwoods and so that's what we used.

- *memorable turns of phrase:*

I miss when we had a rain.

You can't buy ham hardly fit to eat.

Them good ole days wasn't good.

- *kernels of wisdom and irony:*

A hardship is not a hardship if it's general. If you suffer alone, then it's a hardship.

Just because you're raised on a farm don't make you a farmer.

Nowadays people have to work for a living.

- *reflections on days gone by:*

I can remember a time when a teacher's job depended on how good their Christmas program was.

People don't neighbor like they used to.

I drove [the school bus] for fifty years. The great thing was seeing the kids grow up. I probably would not drive another fifty years today. The kids aren't the way they used to be. It isn't their fault but rather ours.

- *and anecdotes at once pleasing and poignant.*

I think one of my best childhood memories that gives a glow to my heart is coming home from some place and being cold—seeing the glow of the kerosene lights through the windows. I'm cold. My feet are cold. My hands are cold. And I knew it would be warm inside and supper would be ready.

Excerpts from *Sunup 'til Sundown*

SAND ROCK HIGH SCHOOL, LEESBURG, ALABAMA

SAMUEL PATE

November 22, 1914

It is hard to remember how old I was when I first began farming. My dad owned a small farm and I helped him. My dad usually did the farming until I got a good bit older. My mother and I did hoeing and whatever else was needed. The thing I enjoyed most about farming was just seeing things grow. I remember before I got large enough to work in the field, my mother would let me help in the garden and to get me out of the way, she let me have my own little garden in the corner. It was my job to do the garden, and that's how I learned.

GEORGE HENRY FARMER

October 6, 1903

One of my first memories was of my father making cross ties, which was a good source of money. They were out of oak timber and he sold them to the railroad. He cut his foot about April 1911 and he couldn't farm. He hired a boy and the boy quit and went fishing. My mother gave me a little bucket of corn and told me to start dropping it in the tracks. She covered it with a hoe. I was about six and half years old. I started working on the farm then. That's the first thing I can remember.

... To plant cotton, we started with a one-horse turning plow. They would plow each side of the old row and then take that single stock and run that out and plant the cotton on a bed. They made a bed in last year's middles and planted seed on that. I can remember when they didn't have these knocker distributors.

They'd take what they called a guana horn. A lot of times the women did that. They'd take that horn and a little bag of fertilizer and make it 125 pounds to the acre as near as you can.

The safest way to get your message through was to put somebody on a mule and send them down the road to tell it—by word of mouth.

Sunup 'til Sundown: An Oral History of Agriculture in the Lookout Mountain Area was published by students in Agri-science classes (from 1998 - 2000) at Sand Rock High School in Sand Rock, Alabama.

When we started out, there was one person with that one-horse turning plow and there was one with the guana knocker. With the cotton seed planter, that made about three operations. Or it might be four.

... I don't think we had a telegraph. They had a telephone line, I reckon, as far back as I can remember. It was nailed to mostly trees. You'd whoop and holler at one every once in a while. You might get through. The safest way to get your message through was to put somebody on a mule and send them down the road to tell it—by word of mouth.

BONNIE FARMER MACKEY

March 8, 1911

... The washing was done by hand. We hoed and chopped cotton, then corn, dropped peas. There was enough boys in the family that we didn't plow too much. They'd always rather plow than hoe... I have plowed a little if they got into a tight or something. I've helped run the planter. But I'd rather run the guana knocker, because it didn't tell on us if the seed didn't come up. We milked cows and churned and had our own milk and butter.

... When my brother, Ray, got his first little suit of clothes—they called it a Buster Brown—he tried it on and went running down across the field and fell down. They said, "Get up." And he said, "I'll have to

take my hands out of my pockets." He had never had pants with pockets in them.

...It was a lot different. I'm with that sort of like I'm with the churches. I don't know whether it's for the best. Maybe it is... People don't neighbor like they used to. Now my mother, when she was growing up, if we had beans in the garden and some of the neighbors didn't, she'd tell them to come and get a mess of beans, or whatever extra she had. Now they would sell them to you. . . But I guess I miss people a visiting and all. Used to, people would come in in the winter, especially, and sit 'til bedtime. They'd parch peanuts and make syrup candy and sing old love songs and old ballads. I miss people coming in. I think television took that.

CURTIS ROBERTSON

July 3, 1908

...In the winter we only cut wood— firewood and stove wood. We did it with a crosscut saw. Boy, sometimes we would run, maybe, two saws. We would cut up enough in a day to last a week or longer. Back then, in cold weather, we didn't have a wood heater. We had a fireplace. We didn't have any heat in the bedrooms. We had quilts and a feather bed. A lot of people call them the "good ole days" but them good ole days are gone. Them good ole days wasn't good. I guess I ought to be proud of being raised that way. I know what hard times are.

RUTH BAILEY JOHNSON

April 11, 1926

We all had our little jobs every day to do and I rushed around and did my little jobs. We made our own bed and I did a lot of sweeping in the house. We did our own yards and there wasn't grass on them then. We swept those yards. We didn't know what grass was in the yard back then. If there was a little grass, you got it out. And we swept the yards with what you call brush brooms.

But I guess I miss people a visiting and all. Used to, people would come in in the winter, especially, and sit 'til bedtime. They'd parch peanuts and make syrup candy and sing old love songs and old ballads.

That brush broom was on the edge of the property. Really it was dogwood. We wouldn't dare bother a dogwood now, but it was full of dogwoods and so that's what we used.

...We had a wood stove. It was a good stove... I can remember that stove and I can remember when I was about four- or five-years-old we'd usually keep one stick of wood in there to keep it going. My mother was washing and she said, "Just go and put one little tiny stick in there to where we'll have good water to wash dishes with." So I did. And I stacked one plate at a time and got every plate off the table and carried one plate at a time. I could barely reach where to put it. Then I got my high chair. I got in the chair and washed all those dishes. When I got through washing the dishes and glasses like Mama did, I went out and told her, "I have washed the dishes." And she said, "Oh, honey, now mama won't have water to wash the dishes with." And I said, "But Mama, they're clean." I remember Mae, my sister, coming home from school. I said, "I've already washed the dishes." And she said, "YOU washed the dishes? Does Mama know you washed the dishes?" I said, "Yes. I used all her hot water." I washed them from then on.

MARVIN HOMER PARKER

October 26, 1906

...I came back to Alabama to see my folks maybe once a year... I got a job in Detroit, Michigan one summer at a machine shop making good money and I almost quit school. I asked a man how cold it got there in the wintertime and he said that the little old river froze over and horses

Sunup 'til Sundown *continued*

and wagons crossed it, and that changed my mind. Right back to school I went.

...I have never been kicked by a mule. Most of the time you fetched your mule and got him pretty gentle and they understood that you were hooking them up to plow. ...A lot of the mules they call "Missouri" mules. Most of them were reddish looking and brownish looking and some of them were pretty mean. You would kind of have to break them in, plowing with a turning plow. It didn't take them long to get gentle and working. Some of the people fed their stock pretty well and my dad always said that if you work something, you need to feed it. Quite a few didn't feed their stock very well at all and they got awful poor by the time the farming season was finished.

HAZEL WIGLEY ARTHUR

April 26, 1920

...I never will forget going to my first cousin's house. We had a playhouse. You don't see a playhouse now with kids. They want to stay in and hear what grown folks are having to say. We played with broken dishes or something like that. I never will forget that I'd taken a little piece of a broken plate out of my cousin's playhouse. When I got home, my mama said, "Where'd you get that?" I said, "I got it out of the playhouse." She said, "You just march yourself right back down there and put it where you got it." Well, it was getting about sundown and that scared fire out of me. I ran all the way down there and I had to tell them about it. I want you to know that I didn't pick up anything else from anywhere else. It's a good thing she did that. I never did think nothing about it, but that broke me from picking up anything. I appreciate that too. I appreciate my raising. I sure do. I appreciate my raising.

We raised our chickens—we had chickens and eggs. I know that if anybody would come and

stay all night with us, Mama would go out and kill a chicken for breakfast. It's uncommon to have chicken for breakfast now. But that's what we had. We were poor, but we didn't know better. We were raised like that and we grew what we could. I can remember Mother and Daddy had just enough cans of sausage to do us 'til Christmas. She'd hide some back to have for Christmas. ...I never went hungry in my life. I can say that and say truth.

I asked a man how cold it got there in the wintertime and he said that the little old river froze over and horses and wagons crossed it, and that changed my mind. Right back to school I went.

...I can remember when there was no Coke. I know my Granddaddy Akins ran a store and he never did have Coca-Colas and candy bars. He bought candy in a barrel and I know he used to get some of us grandkids to sweep out his store. He'd pay us in candy. It'd be a handful.

...We went barefooted then. Everybody did. . . This sounds crazy, I know, to a lot of young folks, but we used to get guana in white sacks. Then they got to where fertilizer would come in printed sacks. I've seen menfolks wear guana sack shirts to church. I've worn printed guana sack dresses to church... I got to where I could learn to sew and we made 'em. We'd starch and iron them and they'd look just like prints you'd go to town and buy. We used guana sacks for towels and wash rags, too, and dish rags. We'd wash guana sacks and they'd be just as white as any cloth you could get. Boy, you had to do some scrubbing to get the letters out.

...Nowadays, people have got to work for a living. They don't visit one another like they used to. And it's getting worse, I'm afraid. If you needed help from anybody—if anybody got sick where they couldn't make their crop—the neighbors went in and plowed it out and worked it out for them. You won't catch anybody doing that now. Everybody's got to work for a living now.

L. D. PEARSON

November 14, 1924

...Through the age of ten, of course, the only thing we ever knew about farming was with mules. Then, the tractor came into use. It was about 1937 and we managed to get an Allis Chalmers tractor. I was always the kind of boy you knew that was doing things he shouldn't. I guess I learned to drive that tractor and I learned that it has spark plugs and they have a lot of fire in them. I would get a hold of those spark plugs and I would stick my hand out and shake hands with somebody and they'd get a shock out of it.

And finally, I got to where I would tie a spark plug to baling wire. We'd feed little pigs in an iron trough or skillet. I'd tie the wire up to the skillet and pour buttermilk and see the pig try to eat with that spark plug charged. Every time they got a bite of buttermilk, sparks would fly. And the other thing we had was a big apple orchard and we used to gather apples to feed to the cows. I would take long pieces of baling wire and make a necklace out of apples and tie it up to the spark plugs and give it to the old cow. I tell you, she would really bellow. Now, to me, that was fun back then. Mildred said it was cruel and I guess it was. But, you know, we didn't have TV and radios and all those things. We had to find something to do and make our own fun.

ALVIN REEVES

October 10, 1925

You know, a kid can learn how to figure on the farm. Mathematics is the most highly used—should be in anybody's life. He's going to use that more than anything if he knows how to.

...Growing up on a farm and living on a farm was like going to school. First thing I learned was accepting jobs and responsibility. The kids had to be trustworthy. We had to learn how to manage—learning how and when to plant and when to gather; identifying plants and trees; what was good to eat or what was poisonous. We had to learn to have some ingenuity.

We didn't have TV and radios and all those things. We had to find something to do and make our own fun.

... Just because you're raised on a farm don't make you a farmer. We had a guy stop here several years ago, wanted to hire to me and we needed a hand occasionally. I said, "What can you do?" He said, "I can do anything you can do; I can drive a tractor," and I said, "Yeah? You ever cultivate

with a tractor or plant with a tractor? You ever plow with a tractor?" And he said, "No, but I can drive one," and I said "Yeah? I got a little granddaughter down there (then, Casey was just six years old); she can drive that tractor. She can drive it all over that field, but she can't cultivate with it and she can't plant with it." And he couldn't either.

ALMA GAUTNEY

February 12, 1918

When I was four-years-old, my little brother, Jodie, died. He was three-years-old when he died. I remember what he looked like, and playing with him, and what a good kid he was. I always said he was just too good to live, so God took him on home. He'd ask my mama every day if she loved

Sunup 'til Sundown *continued*

each one of the kids. Then he'd say, "I love them too." Doctors didn't know much to do back then. They tried to help him some way, but he finally died. I remember when he was buried it was pouring rain. They didn't have covers over the graves like they do now, and they were dipping out the water to bury him. It was terrible. We couldn't go up to the cemetery. It was raining too bad. That liked to killed my mama and daddy.

Nathan Graves

August 16, 1924

...I miss when we had a rain. There were creeks around that we could go fishing in if we caught up with work. If we wanted to have a good time, we'd all go down to the creek. They'd have a few places we could go to the church groups on Wednesday nights. Most of the time people like me that wanted something to do on Sunday night would go to church, but they wanted to go and have a big time, be with other people. You miss things like that because now if you go somewhere for entertainment you better carry your billfold because it's going to cost you something before you get home.

You miss things like that because now if you go somewhere for entertainment you better carry your billfold because it's going to cost you something before you get home.

...I remember the Depression. People kept talking about it and we got to watching and soon people started coming down the road in wagons and buggies. There might have been one or two cars in the whole bunch and they were going to Collinsville to get their money out of the bank. Daddy never went. I remember one of the bigger farmers around—somebody—asked him if he was going to take his money out and (he chewed tobacco real fast, all the time) he said, "Why, no, I ain't gonna take nothing out of there. If they get that I'll just make some more."

Excerpts from *Celebrating the Pioneering Spirit*

FLAMBEAU SCHOOL DISTRICT, RUSK COUNTY, WISCONSIN

WILLIAM READ

My name is William Read. I was born on July 21, 1930 in Ladysmith, Wisconsin. I had three brothers and one sister. We used to go skating a lot. We had the clamp-on skates. We would go down to the creek and skate at night whenever we got our chores done. It was dark, but that was the fun of it. We'd start a bonfire and sit around the fire to warm up. Then we'd go out skating, fall through the ice, and come back and dry off—and go again.

We had eighty acres. We plowed thirty of that open. We used to farm that all with horses with a one-bottom walking plow. Then Dad got fancy, and he bought himself a riding two-bottom plow. We had to borrow a team of horses, so we didn't get to use it very often. We used to walk along and hold that plow. We cultivated that same way, with a walking cultivator. Then Dad got fancy and got a riding cultivator. Then we'd fall asleep. We'd sit on there, and it was so hot in that corn field. Pretty soon your head would drop down, and you'd wake up about three rows later.

Farming was all horses at that time. If you had thirty acres, you were a big farmer. There were very, very few tractors unless somebody made one. My grandpa made one out of combine wheels and a Model-A frame and a Model-A motor. It would pull quite a bit.

In them days, everybody helped every-body else. It didn't make no difference who it was. Everybody started over here at John Doe's, and they worked on it until John Doe got his done. Sometimes it was twelve or thirteen farmers all working together. They'd bring their horses and their wagons. The women would cook the meals. They followed right along. If you was working at this farm, you ate at this farm.

Students in Flambeau School District in Rusk County, Wisconsin, published *Celebrating the Pioneering Spirit* in 1998 as part of the Flambeau Festival—a community celebration of local history and heritage coinciding with Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial—that also featured community murals, folk art, and interpretive historical presentations. The oral history booklet features narratives based on interviews with 18 community elders, complemented by current and historical photographs. Students worked with mentors from the Smithsonian Institute and attended its annual Smithsonian Folk Life Festival in Washington, DC.

JAMES MCCABE

My name is James McCabe, and I was born December 12, 1919. I was born in Conrath, Wisconsin.

My father was a rural mail carrier. Back in those days, we didn't run a car in the winter time, so he kept a team of horses. Having horses, he kept a barn. Because of having a barn, we kept cows for the cheese factory we used to have in town. We had 2-5 cows. Our jobs were cleaning the barn and watering the stock. My father usually milked, although we did sometimes. That was the first thing we did when we came home was clean the barn and water the stock. We helped in the garden with what crops my father raised to feed the livestock.

I think one of my best childhood memories that gives a glow to my heart is coming home from some place and being cold. The house that stood here was log. Seeing the glow of the kerosene

Celebrating the Pioneering Spirit *continued*

lights through the windows. I'm cold. My feet are cold. My hands are cold. And I knew it would be warm inside and supper would be ready.

There wasn't any such thing as insulation in houses; your feet in the winter time were always cold. You would get white patches on your feet called chilbaines from being so cold on your feet, but this was the way everyone was. A hardship is not a hardship if it's general. If you suffer alone, then it's a hardship. But if everyone is the same way, it isn't. By modern standards we were quite hard up, but in standards of those times, we were relatively well off. We raised 90 percent of what we ate.

At Christmastime, we would always cut our own tree. It's a miracle we didn't burn our house down, because we had little clips with cups on that held candles. You would put those on the Christmas tree and light the candles—not everyday, just Christmas Eve you did that. You sat there and watched it, so it didn't burn down. We always opened our gifts on Christmas morning. Turkey is now the common holiday meat, but we always had goose because my mother raised them.

Alta Hutchens

I was born on September 23, 1939, in Akron, Iowa. My family moved to the area when I was 10 months old. I am the only girl, and I am the oldest, with three younger brothers. When we were young, my brothers would help my dad, and I was always



James McCabe sitting with a 100-year-old musket in front of a log cabin he built.

I played the piano in church, accompanying the choir. I remember paying for the piano lessons with chickens and eggs!

Mom's helper. My mom and I would cook meals and do the laundry. But that's not all I did. I also helped Dad by milking cows, and I drove the tractor. We had about 100 chickens in the spring, and it was always sort of my project to take care of them from when they were small until they got bigger. Then I would collect the eggs and feed them. My family lived on a normal dairy farm, so there was always plenty to do.

I went to the Tony School, home of the Tony Tornadoes. That was before it was the Falcons. I went all 12 years in Tony. In school, I wasn't much into sports, because

back then they didn't have girls' sports, like basketball and softball. I made up for that in music. I played the piano, clarinet, and was in choir. I played the piano in church, accompanying the choir. I remember paying for the piano lessons with chickens and eggs!

I can remember when my family and I lived near the highway. A train which we called "Old Smokey" would go by about 6-8 times in a day, and we could set a clock to this. When he went by, we could actually feel the house shake. Just to tell you how nice it was to live near the highway, Greyhound buses would stop by the driveway and pick me up to take me into town. Otherwise, I

would have to ride into town on a milk truck. This just would not happen nowadays.

VERLYN "BUD" FISER

I, Verlyn Fiser, was born on November 1, 1931 at Grandpa Fiser's house about three miles east of Ladysmith on Old 14.

My father's name was Claude Ellis Fiser, and my mother's name was Antoinetta Adelida Anna (Crabb) Fiser. She was known as Nettie, and my father was known as Jack. They named me Verlyn Ellis, but everybody calls me Bud. "Bud" came from my oldest brother Don. He couldn't say brother, so he'd always climb on the edge of my crib and say, "This is my baby budder."

My father came up here from Iowa. He rode all the way on a train in the cattle car with the cows. The rest of my family came up in a Model-T Ford. He was in the service a year or so before and had won a purple heart. He was deaf toward the end but could read lips really well.

My Uncle Hank was a good fellow. When Cheskys built the barn, they were tearing down the old one, and Hank was helping. I don't remember if Dad was there or not, but they were letting it down with a hay rope and a small pick-up. Either the rope broke or the knot slipped. Hank happened to be beside the woodpile that luckily kept the barn off him so it didn't kill him. He went to the hospital, and they said he was okay.

The next day, he went back and wanted to know if his teeth were supposed to be one way and his jaw the other. He had broken his jaw. Once we were filling the silo with clover; we put a windrow behind a horse puller. It wouldn't roll, so Hank made me drive the horse while he ran with the pitch fork. Pretty soon he said, "Whoa," and the horses stopped. I turned around and looked. He took a deep breath and his teeth fell out, but he caught them before they hit the ground.

In 1936 there was a big fire that started at the Four Corners and went all the way to Sawyer County. My dad drove the grader making the fire ditches. First, it went to the southwest because of the wind. Then the wind changed, and it came up to where we live now on Girod Road in the Township of Big Falls. We watched the fire as it came upon a hemlock tree. The sparks and heat started the tree top on fire. The neighbors managed to save the hay stacks. It did burn the blueberry marshes and some of the fields.

In 1941 was the Labor Day flood. The Thornapple River flooded by the town hall. My dad marked the door on the town hall where the water was highest, and the mark would still be there today if they wouldn't have put in a new door.

We played a lot of ball games. Ages were from 70 down to really young. John Zimmer always made sure little kids hit the ball and tossed it gently. Then he'd make sure they got on base. John

always said that he had to learn to run, because he couldn't fight and he couldn't keep his mouth shut.



Mr. and Mrs. "Bud" Fiser

[My wife] Elaine and I were getting ready to milk one day. The kids were at Aunt Margaret's. I was in the milkhouse, and Elaine came out and said our black angus was out at the end of the driveway. About that time the dog came out, and the black angus went up the telephone pole. It was a

bear. I told Elaine to get in the house. We went up to the front room window to see the dog circling the bear. He made a jump at the bear and then took off. The bear went after him. Elaine let the dog in the house, and there was no shutting him up. About that time, I went after the rifle. I had it

Celebrating the Pioneering Spirit *continued*

in one place and the shells in another. I was nervous and shakey. I asked Elaine where the bear was. She opened the door, and the bear headed for it. She closed it. I walked over to the window. The bear hit her feet just below the window. I went to the upstairs window and aimed. One shot right in the heart. She went up and dropped by the mailbox. [Hank, Margaret and the kids] pulled up by the mailbox and said, "Hey, you know you got a dead angus over here." The game warden came by later and field dressed it. That's how I know I shot it in the heart. So, I bought a bear for \$10.

FRANK KOZIAL

My name is Frank Kozial. I was born in our home in Chicago. I was one-month-old when my family came to this area. I have lived here all my life. My parents came to this area to find a good way to make a living. We farmed three and a half miles north of Sheldon. That was all wilderness when we came. There wasn't anything there. I lifted a lot of rock. I remember using dynamite to blast out the stumps. That was before the bulldozers came out. The Great Depression was rough, but we had what we raised.

I worked for neighbors when I was about fourteen- or fifteen-years-old. That was my first paying job. I got ten cents an hour, fifty cents a day. That was work. Ten cents was worth a little more back then. You could buy a pair of shoes for less than a dollar, overalls for about the same price. There was nothing pleasant about my job, but it was the only thing we could do. You knew you had to go out to milk and feed the cows. You knew what you had to do, and that's what you did. We milked ten to twelve cows.

Ten cents was worth a little more back then. You could buy a pair of shoes for less than a dollar, overalls for about the same price. There was nothing pleasant about my job, but it was the only thing we could do.

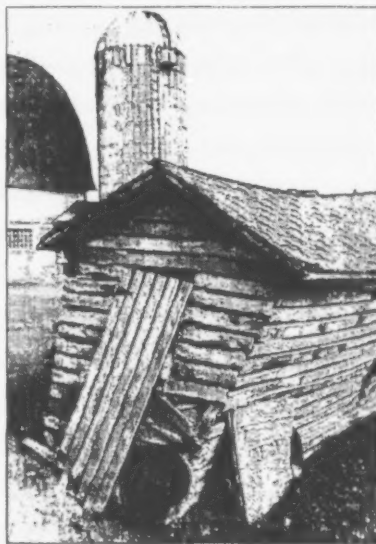
Milked them by hand, no machines back then. We separated our milk, then took the cream and put it in a milk can, tied a rope to it, then dropped it in the well. Once a week we would run it into town. We took it to the Soo Line, where they would load it on the train and haul it off.

We got up at five and worked until eight, so we worked a lot. Work is never done on a farm. I farmed all my life with the exception of four years in the service. There was ten of us kids. Our house was pretty small. We had to sleep three or four to a bed. I had the job of slicing rutabagas for the cows. That was a daily job, morning and night. We had a rutabaga slicer, that was a big saver. If you did something wrong, you heard about it through a razor strap. That didn't happen very often, I

learned the first time. I think we were pretty much a well behaved bunch of kids.

PETER GROOTHOUSEN

In 1946, the REA—Rural Electrification Act—Co-op came to buy the land or wanted to get an option on it, is what they called it. Back then, utilities had more power than today. They threatened that if you didn't sell it, they'd condemn it and all kinds of stuff. Actually, we didn't come out very good. When we got done, we were living up here, that farm was gone, but the money was gone, too, because we



An old out building on Pete Groothousen's farm.

moved the house. The barn we built new. We moved the grainery, the chicken coop, and all kinds of stuff. Just to say, most of the farmers didn't come out very good. Part of that was also because you didn't know your rights. It was all new to you. Now today, if they tried to pull that off, well, it would be different.

When we moved the house, my brother Joe was real little, four-years-old or three-years-old. For many years he was called "Baby Joe." The house was moved by a moving outfit out of Rice Lake called Arnevik, which is still in business today. My mother had fire in the cook stove, and that fire never went out. She stayed right in the house, in a rocking chair with my brother Joe, and they moved it about a mile and a half.

JEAN HOWARD

When our kids were growing up, there was nothing for kids to do around here. So we started the Onni-Padi-Doon 4-H Club. Carl Johnson was one of the first kids to join. There were about 30 members at first, but at one time, it got up to 60 members. Our family was and is still very active in 4-H. We did many of the same activities then as they do now. Dairy was strong, also sewing and foods. We didn't have dogs or horses like they do now. This year will mark the 50-year anniversary of the 4-H Club we started. We were chosen

You see, the schools were the center of many social events, like dances and PTA meetings. The loss of the school meant loss of community.



Jean and Harlan Howard

Grand Marshals of the Glen Flora Days Parade.

I began teaching at the Normal School. A person could start teaching one year after high school. Then it was two years after high school a person could teach. In 1964, a four-year degree was needed. I was the only elementary teacher that had a degree. At the end of my first day, I remember thinking, "I don't know how I can do this job. I don't know a thing!" A

fond memory from teaching that sticks out in my mind is a group of seventh graders. They were one in a million, because I could toss out an idea, and I would just get out of the way. Later, I learned 90 percent of that class went on to college.

I can remember a time when a teacher's job depended on how good their Christmas program was. We did plays and skits, we marched and a variety of other things. You see, the schools were the center of many social events, like dances and PTA meetings. The loss of the school meant loss of community.

WILLIAM PFALZGRAF, SR.

I was born on August 15, 1926 in Lewistown, Montana. My family consisted of my parents and two other siblings. When I was an infant, the entire family traveled to Ladysmith, Wisconsin to establish a new homestead.

As I became older, I attended a one-room school house, near where I live, called the Pepper School. Still today, I can remember my first teacher's name, Harriet Rauhut. She was responsible for up to 35 students at a time. I think it really helped us learn more by being in the same room as the older kids, because it exposed us to harder lessons.

Celebrating the Pioneering Spirit *continued*

We may have had only the “three Rs,” but we learned them well. Today, the students have so much more to learn with computers and all.

When I was growing up, one of my favorite things to do was to go to town (Ladysmith) on payday. In those days, we traveled in a wagon pulled by a team of horses. Once we got there, we bought flour, sugar, and other baking things that would keep 'til next month. We didn't need to buy vegetables, fruit, and other things, because Mom raised them in her big garden. We never bought meat either, because my family used to smoke meat. The greatest thing about going to town was my brother, my sister, and I would be able to get some treats like candy bars and ice cream cones. That always made the trip!

As I got older, I started hauling milk for D. E. Atkins, who lived only a few miles from our place. I was one of the lucky people who hauled the milk in an International Harbor Van. It wasn't as smooth as what we drive today, but it sure beat sitting behind a team of horses. The roads were really rough and in poor condition. During the winter, they were even worse. It took a lot longer to get them cleaned after a snowstorm than it does today. But whether the roads were flooded or there was snow, we always found a way to get the milk hauled.

Another thing I did was drive the school bus. I drove for fifty years for the Ladysmith School District. The great thing was seeing the kids grow up.

The great thing was seeing the kids grow up. Over all those years, I never really had any problems with the kids not behaving. They knew if they got into trouble, they would have to face Mom and Dad later at home.

Over all those years, I never really had any problems with the kids not behaving. They knew if they got into trouble, they would have to face Mom and Dad later at home. For almost all, that was reason enough to behave. I probably would not drive another fifty years today. The kids aren't the way they used to be. It isn't their fault but rather ours.

VIRGINIA BROST

My name is Virginia Brost. I was born on June 6, 1928, in Auburndale, Wisconsin. I was the youngest of eight children. I only had an older brother and sister around when I was growing up. We got along fine, but we had our little spats.

On the farm, my job every night was to bring in the wood for our wood stove. I went to work when I was 16 at a telephone company and also a restaurant. At the telephone company, I answered the switchboard. It was lots of fun. It was nothing like today—you had to connect everybody. If the little drop went down, you put your plug in there, and then you had another little plug. You put that into the other place, wherever you'd be calling.

In high school, the only athletic thing we had was basketball, and that was strictly all boys. And so that was our big activity; we went to basketball games. After that was over, we never had anything else as far as that line. I went two years to parochial school and two years to public school. I walked to school or my dad took me, but we only lived a mile from school. At that time, if you lived within three miles of school, the buses didn't pick you up.

The fun day to go to school was when you had a snowstorm. They never canceled school. There was never such a thing as canceling school, but usually in those days when it was really snowy, there would only probably be about 25

kids through the whole eight or ten grades that could walk real easy to school. We just fooled around and did fun things. We really didn't have "school."

IVAN STOLL

My name is Ivan Stoll. I was born July 3, 1923 in Minnesota. There were seventeen of us children. We were a happy family. We were also a singing family. That was one of my favorite memories. It was in the evening when Dad and Mom would gather us round to sing songs.

I was raised during the Depression and the dry years: the Dirty Thirties they called them. We had a few animals, not very many. I learned to milk cows by hand when I was about eight-years-old. It was us children's responsibility, the boys, to do the chores.

Christmas was always one of the best times of the year for us kids at home. I remember one year, it was during the Depression, we didn't have any money for Christmas. My uncle sent us some money. It was only three dollars, but it was enough that Mom bought us all a present. My brother and I both got a truck.

In 1929, I was six years old when the Depression came and we were so hard up. Dad would work in the woods and cut wood. He could average a cord a day, which was a logger's cord. For poplar, he would get a dollar seventy-five; hard wood would be two and a quarter. He averaged a cord a day. You multiply that times three hundred and sixty-five, and you know what our gross income was for the year.

I never liked school very good, but I had the best grade in my class of the boys—because I was the

I never liked school very good, but I had the best grade in my class of the boys—because I was the only one!

only one! We had a one-room school when I started. It had forty children with one teacher. And then when I was in the seventh grade, they built an addition and hired two teachers.

If it hadn't been for my family,

I wouldn't have gotten along like I did. And, of course, I want to give the Lord a lot of credit for the success we had in life and for a good family and for a lot of blessings.

KATHERINE VANDOORN

My name is Katherine "Beats" vanDoorn. I'm 83 years old, and I've lived in this area all my life. My family farmed for most of my life. I went to Hazel School House on the west side of the Four Corners.

All of the neighborhood kids would gather to play baseball. We'd make our own ball with rags sewn together. We spent a lot of time at baseball games. I still go all the time. Horseshoes and sledding were very big. We also had big skating parties in the winter.

During the Depression not too much really changed. The sugar was limited, but everything else we needed we raised right on the farm. We had gardens. We would all go out to the berry patch and make a day of picking berries with the neighbors. We would get a whole tubful of berries and can them for later. All of my canning shelves are still there at the home place. It did taste good in the winter to be able to go down in the basement and pick out a jar!

We ate a lot of venison back then. To preserve it we would can it and salt it. We had a smokehouse where people would bring all kinds of meat to smoke. We would put wood chips in the bottom

Celebrating the Pioneering Spirit *continued*

and they would smolder. The cracks in the smokehouse would let us know when the meat was done. We always had pork and beef. We also made tons of sausage. I remember helping Mom with it. There was never any recipe; Mom would just add a pinch of this and a dash of that. My most favorite meal was potato pancakes.

My parents had 18 children. By the way, I have a really old photograph of my parents, brothers, and sisters. It's hanging right here on my living room wall. We are all standing in front of the lilac bushes in front of our house. Those bushes are still there

Growing up in a large family meant never being alone, being annoyed by others, sharing clothes and just about everything else, too. And it meant being there for each other. We have created bonds that can never be broken by distance.

to this day. Growing up in a large family meant never being alone, being annoyed by others, sharing clothes and just about everything else, too. And it meant being there for each other. We have created bonds that can never be broken by distance.

SECTION VI

Oral History as Interview, Essay, Poetry, and Playscript

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From the Editors

Oral history collections take an interesting variety of forms—from spiral-bound pamphlets, pocket-sized paperbacks, and yearbook-like volumes to the creation (by the technologically savvy) of audio and video tapes, compact discs, and websites.

In written form, students often present their conversations as dialogue, including the questions they pose along with their subject's answers. Other times, though, students eclipse their own presence, hiding their questioning within coherent narratives. Of these, some are in first person point-of-view, allowing the elder to speak directly to readers; others use a third person voice, like a narrator recounting a subject's life.

In some cases, students and teachers push the oral history genre a little further, presenting their interview material as short stories, poems, and plays.

The following selections run the gamut of forms and approaches. We hope they offer a glimpse of the many possibilities for introducing oral history to classes of all subjects and ages.

At the Peacham School in Peacham, Vermont, fifth graders wrote up conversations among three generations.

Humanities students at Copper Basin High School in Copperhill, Tennessee, molded their interviews of community members into biographical essays, then created a website.

Sponsored by the Coalition of Alabamians Reforming Education (CARE), ninth graders at Livingston High School produced *Wisdom of Our Elders*, a collection of essays based on interviews with elders in their Sumter County, Alabama community.

In Henderson, Nebraska, students at the Heartland Community Schools took some poetic license, presenting their interviews with elders in verse.

In Yampa Valley, Colorado, students scripted and performed life stories of community members.

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An Interview with Three Generations at the Kempton Farm

by Nick Comerci, age 12

Nick: Do you think that dairy farming is better now or when you first started?

George: You see, you could do better in all sorts of ways... But we don't work less hours. And there's a certain pressure on you. I think it might be likened pretty easily with a chainsaw.

When I first started working in the woods—and working in the woods is a pretty normal part of your work if you're on a dairy farm in Vermont—we used a crosscut saw and an axe. And now even an axe is rarely found on any sort of woods job. It's almost all saw, chainsaw.

And I'll tell you, there's a really neat thing if you're sawing up wood, blocking up wood with a crosscut saw, a man or a person on each end, pulling it back and forth. It's quiet, you have time either to think quietly or to have conversation. It's hard work but nowhere near as hard as running a chainsaw.

Running a chainsaw really rips your back and your arm, and you have the constant noise, and you also have the thing that says that you have to keep the saw working. You know, with a crosscut saw you could stop. But with the chainsaw, what are you going to do, shut it off? So you don't want to shut it off, you got to keep on going. And you may turn out a lot of wood or whatever you're trying to do with the saw, but I'll tell you, you don't work less hard.

Meet the Mayor of Ducktown, Tennessee, Mr. Carmel Gibson

by Robbie Nicholson

Carmel Gibson is the mayor of Ducktown, Tennessee. He has been the mayor for twenty years and is unopposed this election season, "so I guess that means I'll be here one more term." Not only has he done great things for the city, he has earned the respect and admiration of many. He even has a stretch of one of the local highways named after him.

Carmel was born seventy-one years ago, in 1928. He says he lived a relatively normal childhood, just like everyone else. When he was in sixth grade, he dropped out of grammar school. "I'm a grammar school dropout," he jokes. At that time he began working for a baker at the rate of twelve cents an hour. He worked there until 1945. At that time, he volunteered to join the military. "I was underage, but they let me in anyway." He was in service until 1947.

[For] the two years he was in the service, he was on three different ships, the U.S.S. Hanover 73, the U.S.S. Oneida 22, and the U.S.S. Liberty DD879, which he boarded on June 6, 1946. He also visited places like Guam, Pearl Harbor, and, on three different occasions, the Panama Canal. Mr. Gibson says that he saw many people go, but many people never came back.

Upon his dismissal from the military, Carmel went to work in the coal mines of Kentucky. He also married in 1948. After working in the mines for close to two years, Carmel took off to New York and Casper, Wyoming to build toll bridges. Growing homesick for the Copper Basin, he returned to the area in 1950 and began working at the MacPherson mine with the Tennessee Cop-

per Company. He worked there until 1956. At that time he became the Deputy Sheriff of Polk County and held that position until 1960. After that he began working for the Tennessee Copper Company again. He stayed there for twenty-nine years and nine months.

Over the years that he has been mayor, Carmel has seen Ducktown change with the times. Ducktown was a company town and the downfall of the city began with the closing of the mines. Mr. Gibson said that the mines downsized from 2,000 employees to 250 employees. This left many people jobless. Today, there are only about five hundred "small" jobs in Ducktown. To classify as a "small" job, a business must pay at least minimum wage, and most employees are only hired to work part-time.

"Ducktown has also made progress," Gibson notes, "and the support and help of the people have helped it to grow. We've got the greatest people in the world. All the money in this city belongs to the people, and we do the best with what we have." Carmel says that commerce has been the major industry in Ducktown since the closing of the mines. It brings in approximately four and a half million dollars to the economy yearly.

While he has been in office, Mr. Gibson has been able to do many things for the city. Since the mines have closed, Ducktown has received several government grants and funds to help repair and beautify the city. Seventy run down homes in Ducktown have been repaired so that they are livable under his office. The town is now on a better sewer and water system thanks to government money as well. Mr. Gibson has also lowered the city's property tax from \$1.25 to \$.65.

Carmel Gibson *continued*

All this amazing work has been done by one man, who employs three city employees, one city clerk, and whose office has only one telephone. Mr. Gibson does whatever is needed to help his city. Trash pick-up is offered to the citizens of Ducktown, free of charge, on Monday and Friday mornings. Often, Mr. Gibson will go out and help collect it. "I was elected mayor twenty years ago, and I've been hauling trash ever since!" He climbs

the tall ladders along the streets and hangs up Christmas decorations as well.

Carmel Gibson is one of the most interesting people in the area. From being a baker's assistant, to a toll bridge builder, to a mine worker, to a soldier, to a deputy sheriff, and now mayor, it appears as if there is nothing he can not do. Well, there is one thing he says, "I haven't had a drink in 47 years, but I've smoked every day since."

Wisdom for the Ages: The Story of Julius Brown

by Antoinette Luckey

Julius Brown was born June 17, 1935 in Arkansas. He grew up living with his grandparents. His grandfather was a farmer, and his grandmother worked as a seamstress. As a child, Julius hated to do his chores. Instead he preferred to play baseball and basketball with his friends from their community.

Julius' school was all black, and he rode the school bus every morning. His favorite subject was social studies, while his least favorite was reading. Math was always the easiest for him, but he really liked maps and to talk about different civilizations. His fellow classmates remember him best as being crazy and foolish, or the "class clown." His pranks and jokes did not have an effect on his grades, however. He earned fair grades but loved to go to school. He usually wore whatever he had, even if it was the same thing he had worn the day before.

On his first date, he went to the movies with a girl who lived on the same block with him. He met his wife through a friend, and they also went to the movies on their first date. He had known his wife for five years before they got married in Chicago, Illinois. He describes his spouse as smart and just "delightful." They have been married more than 35 years.

He found out that he was going to be a parent for the first time from his wife. While the news was a shock to him, he enjoyed the toils of fatherhood. They went on to have four children, and everything they did amazed him.

His first paid job was a restaurant, where he worked starting at the age of eight. During his

high school years he was employed at a grocery store and while in college he worked for a cleaners. As an adult, Mr. Brown worked for the United States Labor Department, the United States Army, the Sumter County Board of Education, and he now works for the Sumter County Transportation Department repairing roads.

During the Civil Rights Movement, he was involved in the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference), the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and other organizations during that time.

Mr. Brown was and is a hard-working, civic-minded man whose goals and intelligence are worth admiring. I appreciated learning about the life of this great man.

Survivor: The True Story: The Story of Ms. Louise Winn Carter

By Raylonda Carter

Louise Winn Carter was born in Sumter County Alabama on January 23, 1923. She was raised on the "prairie" of Alabama in an old shack house. There were ten children raised in that particular house, including Ms. Louise.

Louise did not have much of a childhood because early every morning, Louise along with her sisters and brothers had to complete assigned chores around the house and in the cotton fields. After completing their chores, they had to walk five miles to school barefoot in the cold.

After school, she did not have time to play with other children, because she had more house

Essays *continued*

chores that had to be done. She was commonly called "Little Sister" because she was so small, but her small stature did not take away from the amount of work she was asked to do or the time in which she completed it. Although attending school was one of her favorite things to do, she was not able to attend school everyday, because of her parents' problems. Louise's parents were poor and were often unable to send all their children to school. So Louise went to school when she was able, and when she did attend school, she had to borrow a classmate's books in order to complete her class assignments.

She finished school, reaching the seventh grade, at the age of seventeen. At the age of eighteen, Louise was married to Mr. Wallace Carter and had five wonderful children. Raising five children was a job and a half, but once her children were able to take care of themselves, she was ready to go back to work.

She worked for a wealthy white woman in Sumter County. Her job was to iron all of the household laundry. She was only paid fifty cents for every basket of clothes she ironed. While the wages were small, her efforts were not, and Louise was able to help provide for her family.

As a youth and young adult, Louise participated in many pivotal events. She participated in the strike when George Wallace stood in front of the Army Reserve Building because he did not want Blacks to enter Livingston University, the same school now known as the University of West Alabama.

Louise lived a rough life, but in the end she managed to survive.

I learned that we, as a family, can make it through anything and that even as an individual, I have the strength to survive. I AM A SURVIVOR!

Through the Eyes of A Child

by Sara Norris, based on an interview with Don Norris

From inside the kitchen
a boy looked through the window
and saw the silhouette of a man outside.
Though the sun had already begun to set
his weather-worn hands were never idle.
The boy looked on with child-like admiration
as he watched him go about his work.
He nurtured his farm like he nurtured his family
lavishing tenderness and care on each.
To many he was just a simple man
with a quiet conservative nature.
But to the little boy from the kitchen window
he was a hero known plainly as "Dad."

Father's Fear

*by Andrew Regier, based on an interview with
Elda Peters*

Over the horizon the sky darkened
the day turned to night
a greenish haze engulfed the clouds
something was coming

Mother feared a tornado
but a look into father's deep eyes
showed the situation was much worse
his fear spread throughout the family

The dreaded word that emerged from his lips was
"Grasshoppers"
we had heard of the damage they could do
but never thought it would happen to our family.

The Chickens Died as a New Baby Cried

*by Andrea J. Kroeker, based on an interview with
Dinah Siebert*

A hot sunny day in the middle of April
the day the old white chicken house
burned to the ground,
the young baby chicks
were tragically lost in the fire.
But the night was a wonderful night.
The children awoke to the sound of a cry
and heard mother say, "little angel, do open your
eyes."
Dinah was born and as fate had its way,
she grew to love baby chickens.
She played with them day and night,
and she cried when the time would come
to make the little chickens
into the suppertime meal.
One day, she stole a baby chick
and ran far, far away
into the long open field of prairie grass.
Her mother called her in for dinner,
but Dinah did not come.
They found her curled up in the tall grass,
little chicken tucked beneath her chin.
Dinah, born when the old white chicken house
burned to the ground,
was destined to love baby chickens.

Poetry *continued*

School Days

*by Brad Janzen, based on an interview with
Arlene Rempel*

As the car purrs down the road
she thinks about another day of school.
Another day of sitting at the front of the room
studying math during the endless hours of the day.
Looking forward to every day
when she can go to school and learn.
Looking forward every year
to Valentine's Day when Agnes brings the ice
cream.
Hoping that it will rain
so father will pick her up
and save her from the muddy walk home.

The Car Trade

*by Vincent Friesen, based on an interview with
Mark Friesen*

The day we swapped the '53 for the '47
was a day I won't forget.
It made me mad to see the old car go
Because I thought the dealer was
stealing that old car.
I was scared to ride all the way
in the back by myself
because
I could no longer slip between the seats
to sit with dad and mom.
They were so far away and
I hated to be alone.

Blowdown

News Announcer: On the night of October 24th, 1997, a hunting party of eight men settled into cabins owned by Petey and Ray Corbett in Diamond Park. They were in North Routt County in the Upper Elk River Valley, near the Mount Zirkle Wilderness area.

The wind was blowing hard—until about midnight it held. It was reported that the sound was like a plane about to land. Over the Continental Divide east winds blew up to 120 miles per hour, uprooting spruce and aspen trees. The damage covered 12,000 acres of the wilderness area and 8,000 acres of Routt National Forest. These hunters were in the midst of what became known as the Blowdown. They were found huddled in the corner of their cabin, waiting for the rescue team that would reach them, three days later—

Mark: We're here to set the record straight. First of all, we were not huddled in a corner. Newspaper people say anything dramatic to sell a copy.

Chris: And second—

Mark: I was getting to that. Second, it wasn't a rescue party that got us out of there.

Ray: Forest Service wouldn't send any help in. Search and Rescue told me they don't cut trees. It was Johnny Schneider, Nick, and myself who cut away trees from the disappeared road that leads to the cabin where my son and his friends were staying.

Mark: Cool off, Dad. We'll get to your part soon enough. I'm in the middle of the storm of the century here, and every time I go to tell about it, I have my Dad on one side still furious about the Forest Service—

Ray: And they never paid me for clearing that road either!

Mark: ...and the newspaper on the other, talking about the eight huddled hunters frightened in the freezing fore-dawn cabin.

Chris: So we're going to tell you about the Blowdown with a little authority, on account of we were right there in the middle of it.

Eric: In Diamond Park. Really in the middle of it. I mean, it takes an hour and a half in a 4x4 just to reach the place we were that night, and that's before the trees fell.

Mark: But it doesn't start at night. Starts in the afternoon when we got there.

Chris: Right, three o'clock.

Eric: Four o'clock.

Mark: It was three or four o'clock. We had just unloaded the Land Cruiser and decided to have a few swallows of sinking spell medicine. We see more of our group coming up, the usual gang we see every year at this time when we come up to go hunting.

Chris: And the guys say, "Hey, there were a couple of trees down on the way up here." And there had been some wind that day.

Eric: But it wasn't anything out of the ordinary, not really. Just really high gusts, which the weather report had called for.

Mark: We heard the wind, only we didn't feel any of it.

Playscript *continued*

Eric: It wasn't on the ground. It was in the tree-tops, like 20, 30 feet up in the air.

Chris: So we didn't think that much about it. We were really more concerned with the foot and a half of snow that had just fallen that morning. That—and it was cold.

Mark: About zero.

Chris: It was about zero. But we had the propane heater in the cabin, so it was nice in there, about 85. But the Wolfe, he decided to stay out in the tent, King of the Lumberjacks.

Mark: Then a bit later, when we were having dinner, we hear a couple of thuds, so we go out.

Eric: Right near your new pickup was a tree. And another one a few feet away. We thought it was a little weird, but we weren't worried. There wasn't any wind on the ground, so it wasn't scary at all.

Mark: So we go in and have another drink, and we hear a big high-pitched—well, actually, it starts out low and then goes into a high pitch—and bam, bam, bam, right around us.

Chris: We walk outside again, and there's some more trees just fell near the vehicles. And Wolfe, well, as he's picking up his gear from his tent and hauling it to the cabin, says—

Wolfe: You boys might want to move your vehicles.

Eric: So we drive our trucks out to the meadow area away from all the trees. As we're headed back, thud, another tree goes down right in front of us. This makes about half a dozen now.

Chris: Seven.

Mark: It makes six or seven downed trees right around our camp site. So we all decide to move into the big cabin, the one with the thick beams, the chalet. We decide it would hold up better if one of those trees was to come down. So, we're all together having a pretty good time.

Eric: Then 'round 11:00, we heard the wind, still blowing, only now it's different. It starts out as a low rumble, then it starts to change octaves. It goes up three or four octaves until it sounds like a shriek and blows like that for about 20 seconds.

Mark: Then we hear this shhhhhhhh sound. We all scattered to the four corners of the cabin where we would be safest.

Chris: When the shriek was over, we all ran out there with flashlights, and a swath of trees was laid flat. We couldn't see how wide the swath was, so we had no idea how big this storm was. But we all went back inside, and most of us at least, quit drinking.

Mark: It kept doing that—not to the same level but blowing in that pattern—all during the night. Then, around three in the morning, it just starts to shriek. It's on us this time. Bam, a tree hits the cabin.

Eric: It doesn't go through the cabin, but it knocks the propane tank.

Chris: And it starts leaking. And we have a wood fire going in the kitchen.

Mark: And we decide the cabin is not the safest place to be after all.

Eric: We high tail it out, and Wolfe jumps back and tries to work the tank.

Chris: He finally shuts off the valve, but there's propane everywhere.

Mark: And it's cold out there. And we can hear the wind. And we can see what it's doing, but we can't feel it.

Eric: I put my paper cup I'd been drinking out of on the ground, and it just stayed there, right in place, while a tree over to the side of us gets blown down.

Chris: Trees are blowing down all over—only we've still got to clear the propane gas from our cabin. We finally get the propane cleared from the cabin and get inside. We have heat from the kitchen wood stove, but nothing like it was. But that's okay. Then the shrieking starts again. And it's lasting longer each time, with that shhhhhhh noise coming at the end of each one. We recognize what that sound is.

Mark: It's the trees being pulled up—the trees that have been on my daddy's land since he was a kid. They're all being sucked up out of the ground, root balls and all. When we got up the next morning—

Chris: It was about 7:30.

Mark: Right, about 7:30, we go out there, and first thing we realize is we're going to have to cut away trees to get our vehicles out.

Chris: We're all lumberjacks, so we aren't worried.

Eric: But we only have one chainsaw.

Mark: And we're talking 12,000 acres of land, but we didn't know this at first.

Ray: Neither did the Forest Service.

Mark: Okay, Dad, we're getting to you. We decide to go out to the road to see how bad it is. Only, there is no road, none that we could find. And it suddenly dawns on us that all the snow—those 18 inches—was all gone. The wind must have started hitting the land once it didn't have any more trees in the way. I'm not sure where it all drifted to, but it wasn't anywhere around that we could see.

Chris: That was eerie.

Eric: So, then I climbed on top of the trees around the cabin.

Chris: It was a wall of trees.

Eric: It was a good 20 feet up in the air. And I help Mark up, and we look out toward Lost Dog.

Mark: You ever seen pictures of Mt. St. Helen's?

Chris: All the trees laid flat, like matchsticks?

Eric: We were in the middle of a matchstick forest, with one chainsaw.

Chris: Tony went out and shot himself a buck that morning anyway, wasn't going to let some downed trees get in the way of his hunting trip.

Mark: Right, 'til he came back and took a look at what our situation was. There wasn't anymore hunting after that. Just trying to get ourselves out.

Ray: Can I please talk now?

Mark: Then I went into the meadow, so I could get into range with my cell phone to call my dad.

Ray: Thank you. My son called me on the cell phone and said, "Daddy, I'm in trouble." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Oh, trees

Playscript *continued*

blown down everywhere all around the cabin.” And I thought, well, a few trees here, a few trees there. And he said, “You better get somebody.” That’s when I knew he was in some trouble—my boy never asks for help.

So I called John Schneider and asked him if he’d come help. He had a backhoe we could use to assist the rescue team. But when we called the Forest Service, they were no help whatsoever, absolutely none, said they didn’t want to come on Saturday and Sunday. The forest ranger himself didn’t believe me—he was on his way to his nephew’s wedding or something—and I said, “We’re going to go get them, regardless of what you do.”

So, I suppose illegally, we went in there and opened up that road. And to this day, I’ve took the total expense of opening up that road—with no rebate from the Forest Service or anybody, none whatsoever. That’s a lot of work, too. There’s about a mile and a quarter in there of downed trees—and I mean downed trees. You have to see it to believe it. I can show you pictures—I’ve got a lot of pictures—if you want to see it.

Mark: Dad, they believe you. So the helicopters went out on that Monday and realized what folks had been trying to tell them. That’s when you and John—

Ray: I’m telling this part now. By then, I was halfway through where I needed to go. John Schneider—boy, we made it quick on account of him—he had this saw with a blade as big as a kitchen table, and he knows how to use it. And he’s cutting trees faster than we can haul them away with the backhoe. Then it starts getting hard to get the backhoe in, so we’re clearing, hauling pieces of trees away by hand.

But we make it to the boys. We’re the rescue team, because the Search and Rescue unit, they didn’t cut trees—that was their excuse, they didn’t cut trees. So we got in and got the boys out ourselves.

Chris: And we weren’t huddled in the cabin either.

Mark: I went back there this fall. Things are growing back, but it isn’t the same place I remember as a child. My children will have different memories of Diamond Park than I do. But there’s still beauty there. I mean, big mama nature cleared that path. It’s not like it’s a golf course or something—though I could put in a golf course with how cleared out it is now. But I won’t. Folks have been coming to my dad for years to buy that property.

Ray: I’ll never let it go.

Mark: And neither will I. I have always loved that place, always had this honor for the natural way we’ve kept there. And this is nature’s way of making change. I wonder what it will look like when my grandchildren are hunting these lands, vacationing in the cabins. I wonder and look forward to finding out.

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El Llano Grande Journal

Rural Challenge in South Texas

Volume I, Number 1

Editor: Francisco Guajardo

August 1997

Studying Ourselves in Our Schools: An Idea/Project Guide for Edcouch-Elsa and La Villa Teachers

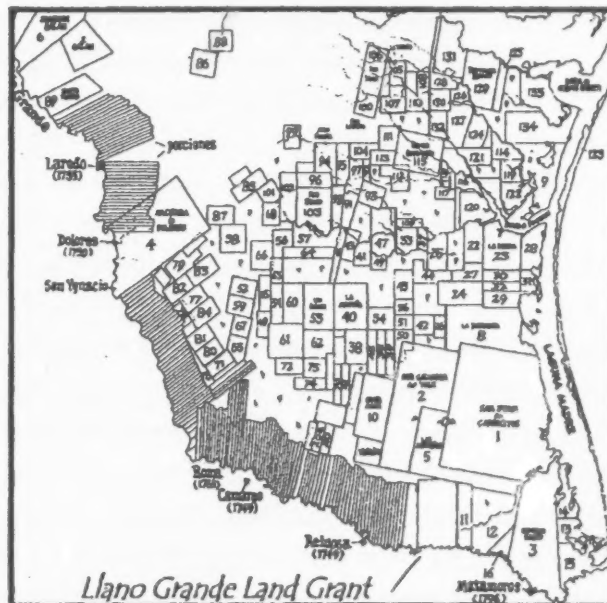
An Overview of Rural Challenge

Bienvenidos al Llano Grande Journal, a publication named after the place it serves, a land named El Llano Grande in the late 18th Century when it was granted to Juan Jose Hinojosa by the Spanish Crown. First the Spanish took the land from the Natives and settled it; then Spanish lands gave way to Mexico; then Mexican lands gave way to the United States. Today the towns of Edcouch, Elsa, and La Villa exist within the geographical boundaries of that old Spanish land grant.

Y bienvenidos al Rural Challenge. In the spring of 1997, under the leadership of Edcouch-Elsa I.S.D. Superintendent Mary Alice Reyes, several folks from Edcouch, Elsa, and La Villa developed a proposal which was then submitted to the Annenberg Foundation to enter its Rural Challenge competition. The Rural Challenge grant encourages rural communities across the United States to rethink the way they teach, namely by placing high value on what are rural and local. We share the Foundation's vision that we fundamentally empower ourselves when we assign a high value to what is local: in history, in science, in the arts, and in every other discipline.

We are pleased to report that we won the grant this summer and are excited about beginning our first year; years two and three will be funded when we demonstrate satisfactory first year work. The Rural Challenge grant offers resources to rural schools willing to be innovative, and they have offered us an opportunity to put Edcouch, Elsa, and La Villa in the center of our instructional universe.

Volume 1, Number 1 of *El Llano Grande Journal* is authored by Ernesto Ayala, Carlos Garcia, Mónica Marroquin, and Francisco Guajardo. Graphics by Lic. Guillermo C. Bosque.



Drawing by: Jack Jackson, from *A Shared Experience*.
Based on the Old Map Collection, General Land Office, Austin, Texas.

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Aerial view of Edcouch-Elsa High School, circa 1950 by photographer Yoder is a prime example of a local historical artifact we can use for study. Notice, for instance, the absence of the present-day gymnasium and band hall. Also make note of an unpaved Yellowjacket Drive and new football field stands. What has changed? What has stayed the same?

Focusing on the Local

Teachers in our districts frequently encourage students to study local history themes. Yearly our students research their genealogy, native vegetation, local politics, etc. But while we have centered some instruction on what is local, we have not followed a local focus throughout the schools and across the curriculum on a given year. We will have that focus and direction this year. A concerted effort emphasizing local themes in classrooms from kindergarten to senior high school can potentially yield terrific volumes of information which we can publish through the Rural Challenge project. If your students produce work you and they are proud of, PUBLISH IT! We will help you.

Some Language from the Proposal

The following are excerpts from the proposal presented to the Annenberg Foundation; therein we discuss our challenges and explore the plan we have proposed to meet those challenges:

How can we establish pride and develop a sense of community? We notice the need to connect to our past, to preserve it for the future and to develop a sense of historical and cultural identity. We recognize the need to improve the social studies and history curricula, and we plan to make them more relevant and meaningful by incorporating local history scope and sequence of instruction. Edcouch- Elsa and La Villa schools districts propose to embark on a comprehensive school and community-wide project whereby the schools, in union with the community, can work to preserve our South Texas heritage.

To harness the potential strength of the community, everyone must participate. Our approach must necessarily be inclu-

sive as we propose to employ the talents of students, professionals and paraprofessionals, and the entire community. We believe in the philosophy that effective child development is a product of the entire community's work. At the core of this extensive history research project, then, is the student: student learning, development, and growth.

Our challenge is to move from the traditional methods of instruction where teachers and administrators control, to a more democratic educational process where students, and just as importantly, the community become integral in the decision-making and research processes. Our project is an ambitious one because it promises to employ the participation of so many, but we are convinced that by democratizing the process can we begin to tell our story. Just as importantly, by democratizing work can we begin to prepare our youth and have effective, sustainable development. If we develop and prepare our youth, we assure ourselves of a brighter future for our community.

The Rural Challenge program at Edcouch, Elsa and La Villa is staffed by Francisco Guajardo, project coordinator, and Ricardo Gamez, researcher and archivist; both can provide direct support to faculty, students, and members of the community needing assistance with local research projects. Their office is at Edcouch-Elsa High School. Please call either at 956 262-4731 for any assistance you may need. Or e-mail them at FGGuajardo@panam.edu.

On doing oral histories

To reconstruct the history of our community we must hear the stories of the people. Much of the history of South Texas is not in the books we study, but they are instead in the folk oral tradition. To capture that history, we must conduct oral interviews. Oral interviews can be an integral part of any course's instructional process. Just as a history class can profit greatly from oral interviews, so can a biology class, or an art class, or any other class. A biology class, for example, can ask people specific questions which relate to plants, animals, and other life forms with which local people interact.

The oral interview process has a structure. First, students and teachers follow the process of identifying interview subjects, after which the student should ask the subject for permission to be interviewed. Then a questionnaire instrument relevant to the class and the interview subject is developed: included here should be objectives and goals of the interview. After fine-tuning the questionnaire (see bottom note on questionnaire development) and securing equipment a tape recorder, cassette, and photo camera if possible, students should then conduct the interview. The final phase, the transcription, is perhaps the most arduous. Students should type the interview, edit, and finalize. Revision of the product would determine whether a follow up interview is necessary.

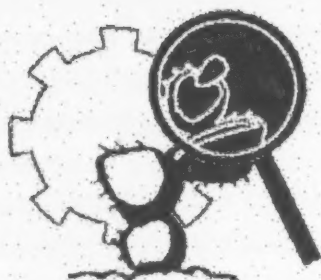
Every class should tailor the questionnaire to meet the needs of the class, but every questionnaire should also ask for the same biographical information. An effective format could have two parts: part one asking for standard biographical and part two asking for questions specific to the needs of the student and class. Part one can follow this model:

Interviewer:
Date of Interview:
Place of Interview (address):
Questions on Interviewee:
Date of Birth:
Place of Birth:
Lived in area since:
Size of family (number of boys? girls?):
People residing in household:
Families living in household:
Level of education:
Income level (optional):
Education of children:

Every interview should also include an Interview Agreement. Please feel free to use the format on the following page; make as many copies as you need.



Oral histories provide an effective means of retrieving information from the past. Illustration from *A Shared Experience*.



**LLANO GRANDE CENTER
FOR RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT**

Interview Agreement

The purpose of the Llano Grande Center for Research & Development's oral interview project is to gather and preserve family and demographic information. Tape recording and transcripts resulting from such interviews become part of the archives of the Llano Grande Center for Research & Development. This material will be made available for historical and other academic research by researchers and members of the family of the interviewee.

We, the undersigned, have read the above and voluntarily offer the Llano Grande Center for Research & Development full use of the information contained on recordings and in transcripts of these oral interviews. In view of the scholarly value of this research material, we hereby assign rights, title, and interest pertaining to it to the Llano Grande Center for Research & Development, Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District and La Villa Independent School District.

Interviewer (signature)

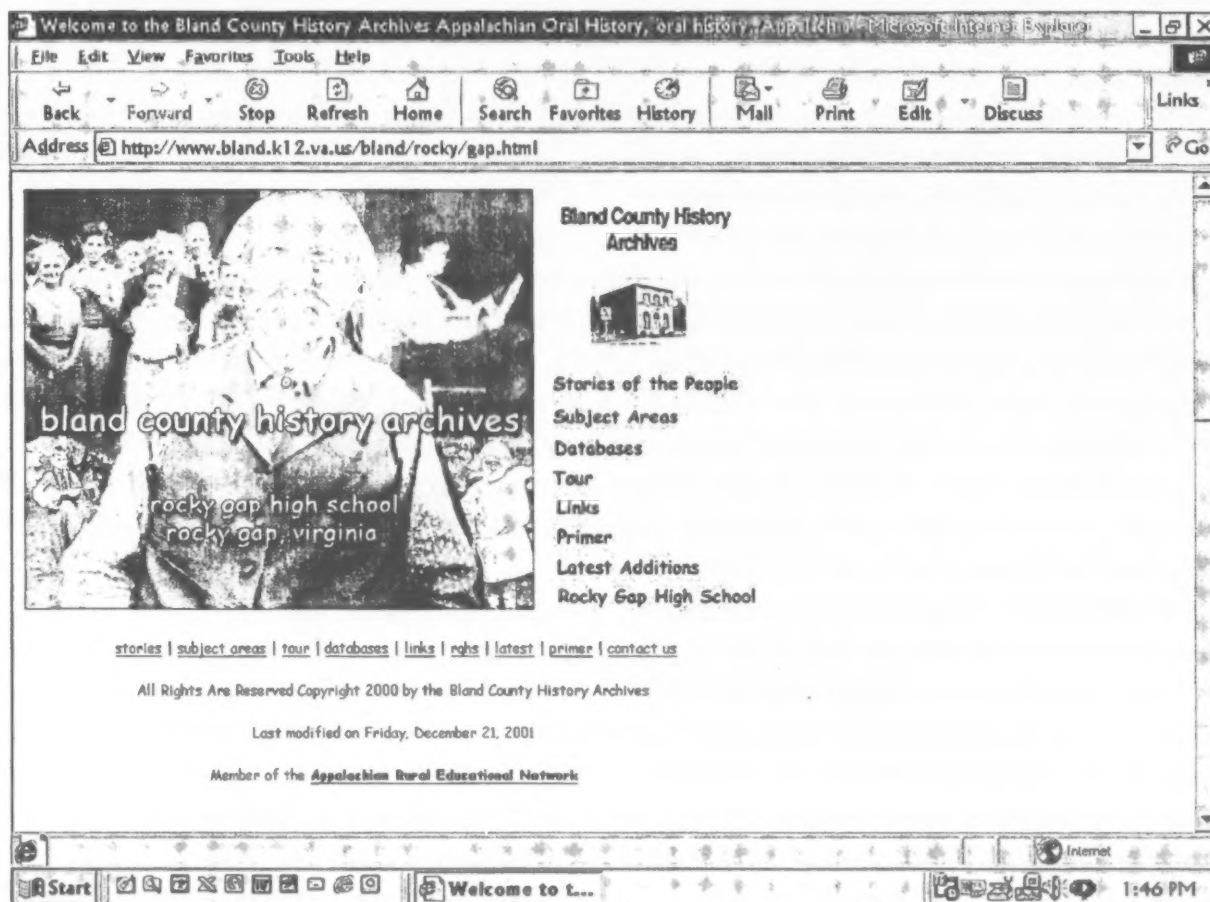
Date: _____

Name of Interviewer (print)

Interviewee (signature)

Date: _____

Name of Interviewee (print)



The Rocky Gap High School Oral History and Technology Project

The Rocky Gap High School Oral History and Technology Project is place-based education. It is grounded past, present, and future in this place, Bland County, Virginia. The history, the culture, the technology, the writing skills, and the organizational and managerial lessons are all rooted in this place, in these mountains.

The project is a unique blend of tradition and technology. Technology is the lure to bring students to their community history through the stories of its citizens. However it is these stories that give content for the technology to organize, manipulate, and publish. The process gives a student sense of place and thus of himself.

The purpose of this part of the Archives is to help teachers or community members initiate similar projects. The links to the right will show how this was done. It will also explain much of the philosophy and thought behind the project.

Rocky Gap students also travel and conduct oral history workshops. A multimedia presentation is available that explains the project.

We plan to have a CD and a short video to share by the end of this school year. Meanwhile we would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Place Based Education and Technology

The key to this project is the philosophy of place-based education. Community and place should be central to the education of a student. The Rural School and Community Trust lists several components of pedagogy of place. They include:

- learning occurs most effectively when an individual is able to relate what he or she already knows to new information.
- constructing new knowledge takes place when a student is actively engaged in grappling with, discovering, experiencing, or manipulating something of personal interest;
- real, authentic work that impacts, and, preferably, improves one's community best prepares students for life beyond school, and
- respect is integral to learning.

A student who respects and is connected to his community and place is a more complete person and thus feels better about himself. This individual becomes a better learner and the community interacts with its schools in a more positive and supportive manner. This project subscribes to the belief that technology is the key to the future. It is more than a tool; it is in fact a new way of thinking and viewing the world. Students learn technology by solving real problems in real time. A student should decide what he wants to do with technology, and then figure out how to do it. Meaningful work translates into lifetime learning. When technology is used to celebrate community it becomes anchored to place and a friendly neighbor, not an alien presence. There are several rules that we follow in our use of technology and sense of design. They include:

- there is more than one way to skin a cat;
- less is more;
- a slow load is a no load;
- our work is fun;
- and work, work, work, and more work.

Technology is usually taught in the abstract, i.e. a Microsoft Office Work Book. Students learn how use technology with Acme Shoe Company. What place-based education is give real content to teaching. It gives a heart to technology that makes it real and relevant to the student.

The links below will take you to some places that support place based education.

Rural School and Community Trust: www.ruraledu.org
Appalachian Rural Education Network:
hwww.uky.edu/RGS/AppalCenter/edprojects/AREN/welcome.html
Orion Society: www.oriononline.org

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/placebased.html>

Oral History Interviews

I wish I could say this project was well planned and researched from the beginning, but it wasn't. Inspired by Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire, it gestated for over 15 years. After many false starts it just happened. In fact it is still happening. My students and I have encountered many bumps along the road. We have learned by doing and we have met many others along the way and we have learned from them. In this section we will share what we know, and hope it will be of some benefit.

- How do you get the project started?
- How do you get students to do the interviews?
- Whom do they interview?
- What are the secrets to a good interview?
- What equipment is needed?
- How do you get the students to transcribe the interviews?

The links to the right will give more information about these topics. The site links below will offer a wealth of information about oral history and related topics.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/oralhistory.html>

How to Start and Sustain an Oral History Project

The majority of interviews and cemetery catalogs are generated by the Junior American History classes at Rocky Gap. I had tried several times to get students to do the oral histories, but they had always looked at me like I was crazy. After several false starts, students finally began to do interviews in 1993. It is a combination of selling the project and requiring that something be done. Once the project gets underway and students receive feedback, the value becomes apparent. However, this may take several years.

Students are required to do a project every six weeks. The project can be a traditional research paper or a local history project. The local history project can be an interview, cemetery catalog, or report on a local history subject. If a good interview is done and a transcription completed, the student receives a grade well over 100. (I have given a grade of 150 to a transcription that was 60 pages long and the grade was more than earned.) In other words, the students are paid for the work they put into their project. Your best interviewers will not necessarily be your best students. Some students really will get turned on and you can just sit back and smile. Others will do it for the grade. I do not care who types the transcript, but no transcript, no grade. Not requiring a transcript is a slippery slope on which your project will quickly slide to oblivion.

The cemeteries have mostly already been done, but interviews and photos are still rolling in. I am also starting to get some good reports on various local subjects . The students use the contents of the Archives to do a report for example on one-room schools. This is good. When you start, do not expect every student to jump up and down with excitement to do an interview. They won't.

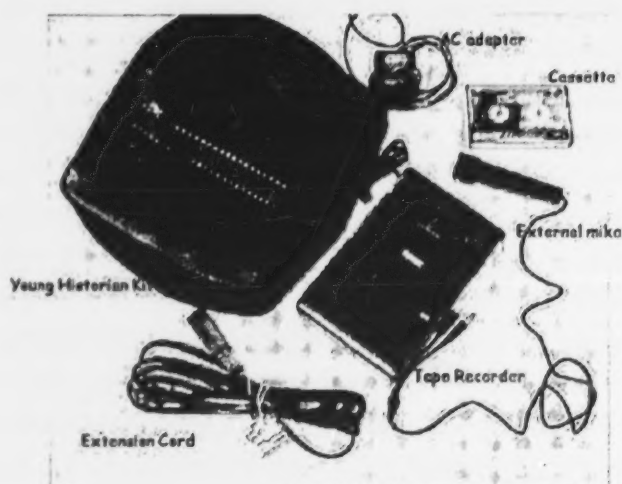
Have students do practice interviews to familiarize themselves with the process. This will overcome some of their hesitancy. Experienced students can conduct interview workshops with younger students. I usually get seniors who have conducted interviews as juniors. This seems to be very helpful. The experienced students enjoy it and the new oral historians enjoy doing something different if nothing else. The class is divided into groups of 3 or 4 and are led into interviewing each other. They use a set of prepared questions and go through all the procedures and checks. They also discuss what they are doing and the results. It really seems to work well.

Good Luck.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/carrotandstick.html>

Oral History Interview Equipment

There are surely many who know more about this topic than we do, but this is what we have learned. The kit has everything that is needed. The students have to check it out. This is very important or you will lose track of your equipment and it will disappear.



- Batteries make the interview easier to set up and less intrusive, but sometimes fail.
 - The extension cord and AC adaptor are more reliable, but awkward to set up.
 - We now use a fairly expensive condenser microphone that fits on a lapel or sleeve. We found out that sound quality is much more important for a variety of reasons.
 - We use good quality 90-minute cassette tapes. I put two in.
 - The bag is crucial. I cruise Wal-Mart and Kmart looking for these things on sale and do not spend much over ten dollars apiece. It should make a fashion statement of some sort. I call it our Young Historian Kit and make a big deal out of it. It is all in fun.
 - I also stuff in a permission form, a copy of the questions, and a pencil and a small notebook for taking, well, notes.
 - I have found the cassette recorders usually go for around \$50. I have used several different kinds. I have found out that a voice actuator is not needed.
 - If my supply is good, I will put extra batteries in.
 - A small foot pedal that will stop and start the tape player is the next best thing to a Dictaphone and costs less than five dollars. I have gotten mine at Radio Shack.
- You need to get as many as possible. My students always wait to the end of the six weeks and it can be a problem when the demand is bigger than the supply. I have about ten working kits at any one time. This works most of the time for about 30 to 40 students.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/portable/equipment.html>

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Interview Questions

We have developed sets of questions for students to use in doing interviews. The standard biographical questions are the most often used by students, however we also have numerous topic-oriented questions. For example there are questions on the railroad, one-room schools, building the tunnels, church questions, military etc. One advantage of having all these questions on the computer is that they can be customized for each situation. Community questions can be modified to fit a particular community. Biographical questions can be changed to delve into particular life experiences of the subject.

If a student has a new topic for an interview we collaborate on coming up with questions. The student brings his own questions in to me and then we sit down and discuss them and come up with new ones. We also are constantly getting new questions, especially biographical, from other people engaged in doing oral history interviews. There are always new angles to elicit the kind of responses that make a good interview.

Prepared questions are not an entirely positive process.

The questions can also be a real impediment to a good interview. Too often students feel they have to ask all the questions and focus on going through them without listening to the answers and following them up with further questions. This problem was worse in years past than now, because we have taken several measures to keep it from happening. The main activity is doing interview workshops. Each year I have seniors in the Local History and Technology Classes do interview workshops with the juniors in the regular American History classes. We use the questions and emphasize the pitfalls of relying too much on them, instead of listening to the answers and asking follow-up questions. I also do interview critiques with students after interviews. By talking about how to do good interviews with the students and getting their input on the process a dialogue is created which makes students think about what they are doing.

I stress that the questions are a guide, not a test. All the questions do not have to be answered. Overall the questions are a good thing because it gives the student interviewer a start and something to go back to in slow moments. Links to samples are found below. They also can be downloaded as Word documents.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/interview.html>

Biographical Questions

Make sure the interview forms are filled out. This does not have to be done until you are finished. A photograph of the subject is nice. Make sure their face fills the view frame. Remember this is just a guide. You do not have to stick to the order of these questions. Let the person you are interviewing talk. If they get on to something interesting ask questions along that line. The best interviewing situation is with more than one person present. They will stimulate each other's memories and fill more at ease with tape recorder.

My name is _____ and I am interviewing _____ at
_____ and the date is _____.

1. Where and when were you born?
2. Who were your mother and father? Where were they born and raised? What did they do for a living? What was your father like? What was your mother like?
3. Who were your grandparents? Where were they born and raised? What did they do for a living? What were they like?
4. Who were your brothers and sisters?
5. Where were you raised? What did you do for fun when you were small? What kind of toys did you play with and what kind of games did you play?
6. What were your chores around the house? Which was your least favorite? Favorite?
7. What was your house like? How was it heated? Did you have running water? What did you cook your food on? How were clothes washed and dried? Where did you get your hair cut? Did you have an outhouse? What was it like?
8. What did you grow in your garden? What was your favorite food?
9. Where did you go to school? What was school like? What did you study? What did you pack for lunch? How did you get to school? Who were your teachers? How did the teachers make the students behave? Did you ever get into trouble at school? How were holidays celebrated at school? Do you remember any funny stories or pranks that were pulled?

10. When you were a child what games did you play? How were they played? Which was your favorite game? Did you play in the creeks in the summer? Did you fish? Did you ride sleds in the winter and build bonfires and have snowball fights? Describe.

11. How did teenagers court when you were young? Did you go on dates? Did you go to the movies? To town? How did you meet your husband/wife?

12. Where were you married? What was the ceremony like? Who was there? Did you go on a honeymoon?

13. What is your husband/wife's name? How many children did you have? What are their names and where were they born? Do you think it was easier to raise children back then than it is today? Why or why not?

14. What was Rocky Gap(or your community, Bastian, Hollybrook, etc.) like when you were growing up? What businesses were there? What was there to do for fun?

15. What was the weather like? Do you remember any bad snowstorms or floods?

16. How did your family celebrate Christmas? Tree? Presents? Meal?

17. What about Halloween? Do you remember any pranks that you played or heard about?

18. What other holidays were celebrated? Fourth of July? Easter? Valentines Day?

19. Who is the first president that you can remember? Who was your favorite movie star? Do you remember the first movie that you went to see? Where was it? How much did it cost?

The following questions are dated. In other words the person you are interviewing is probably too young to remember or even to have lived during the time of some of the questions. Question #20 requires the subject to at least 90 years old. #21 at least in their 80's. #22 and #23 about 70 or so. #24 close to 60. The idea is you do not want to insult someone by asking a question about something that happened before they were born.

20. Do you remember WWI? Did anyone in your family have to go? Did your family support the war? How did others feel about it? Do you remember when you heard it was over? Did people celebrate?

21. What were the 1920's like? Do you remember anything about President Harding? The Teapot Dome Scandal? Do you remember when women got to vote? How did you feel about it? Did you like President Calvin Coolidge? What about Hoover? Were your people Democrats or Republicans?

22. Do you remember when the stock market crashed? Did you think it was going to affect you?

23. What was it like during the Great Depression? How did you feel about President Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal? Do you feel he helped the country during hard times? Did any of his programs, like the WPA, PWA, or CCC, help the people of Bland County? Why did some people oppose or support FDR? Do you remember when FDR died? What was your reaction?

When did you get your first radio? What was it like? What were some of your favorite shows? When did you first get electricity? How did it change your life? When did you get a telephone? How did it work? What were party lines? When did you first get television? What were some of the first shows you watched? How has TV changed things?

24. Do you remember where you were when you heard that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor? How did people feel about it? Did anyone of your family have to go fight in WWII? What was it like during the war at home? Was there rationing? Did everyone support the war? Where were you when you heard the Germans had surrendered? What was your reaction when you heard the atom bomb had been dropped and the Japanese had surrendered?

25. How did people around here feel about President Truman? Did people support the Korean War? Did any of your family have to fight in the Korean War? How did you feel about President Eisenhower? Were the times good in Bland County during the 1950's?

26. What did you think about President Kennedy? Where were you when you heard that he had been shot? How did you feel?

27. How did people feel about President Johnson? Did any of your family fight in the Vietnam War?

28. Do you remember much about President Nixon and Watergate? What did you think about that?

29. What kind of shape is the country in today in your opinion? Have things changed for the better or the worse?

30. Is there anything else you would like to add about life in Bland County? Is there any advice you would give young people today.

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<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/bioquestions.html>

Logging Questions Personal Interview

Make sure the interview forms are filled out. This does not have to be done until you are finished. A photograph of the subject is nice. Make sure their face fills the view frame. Remember this is just a guide. You do not have to stick to the order of these questions. Let the person you are interviewing talk. If they get on to something interesting ask questions along that line. The best interviewing situation is with more than one person present. They will stimulate each other's memories and fill more at ease with tape recorder.

My name is _____ and I am interviewing _____
at _____ and the date is _____.

1. When did you first get into the logging business? How old were you? Whom did you work for? Where were you cutting? Where did you haul them?

2. What did you use to cut the trees when you first began logging? How were they hauled? How were they handled? Did you ever use crosscut saws? When were chain saws used?

3. Did you ever use horse or oxen? If so describe how they were worked? Do you remember or remember hearing any stories about using horses or oxen?

4. Did they still use dinky railroads when you began logging? Do you remember where they were used or any stories about dinky railroads?

5. What kind of trees did you first log? What were they used for? Furniture? Lumber? Props? How have things changed? Do you remember some of the biggest trees you ever

cut? Where were they?

6. Has logging always been dangerous? Have you ever been hurt? Do you remember any bad accidents?

7. Do you remember any interesting characters or people from your years of logging?

8. Has the logging business changed over the years? How? For the better or the worse? Is the pay better today?

9. Do you remember the various sawmills in the county? The Bastion Hardwood Mill? The English Ott Mill in Rocky Gap? Others? How did they operate? Describe the course of the log from the time it went into the mill until it came out as lumber? Has this changed over the years? What are the various machines and saws called?

10. When was the coldest weather that you can remember logging in? The snowiest? When and where were some of the muddiest logging operations that you have worked in? Any memorable incidents of machinery getting stuck in the mud? How did you get it out?

11. Over the years who do you think could sharpen a saw the best? What kind of chain saws have you used in your life? Which one did you like the best? Why?

12. Describe a typical day logging back in the mountains? What time would you get up in the morning? Would you eat breakfast? What time would you start work? How often would you take breaks? Lunch? What would you eat? How often would saws need sharpening? Equipment need maintenance? What time would you quit? Is it easier today than it was? How? What did you used to be paid for a days work?

13. Do you think Bland County has been over logged? Is there more timber available today or back then? What about the quality of timber? Better or worse? Are quality hardwoods harder to find? What do you think about the future of logging in Bland County?

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/loggingquestions.html>

General Church Questions

Make sure the interview forms are filled out. This does not have to be done until you are finished. A photograph of the subject is nice. Make sure their face fills the view frame. Remember this is just a guide. You do not have to stick to the order of these questions.

Let the person you are interviewing talk. If they get on to something interesting ask questions along that line. The best interviewing situation is with more than one person present. They will stimulate each other's memories and fill more at ease with tape recorder.

My name is _____ and I am interviewing _____
at _____ and the date is _____.

1. What is the name of the church? How did it get its name? When was it built? Who helped build it? Has it ever been remodeled? Where is it located? Has it ever been in another location? Where? When?
2. Can you provide a list of all the preachers that have been at this church and when they were there? Are there any church documents that you would allow us to copy? Are there any pictures of the church or its congregation that we could copy?
3. Was the church ever located in a building other than the one it is in now? Was the church building ever used for anything else? Was it something different before it was a church? Was it ever used for anything else at the same time it was a church? Was it ever a school? What grades?
4. What denomination is it? Has it ever been associated with any other denomination?
5. What families have attended the church over the years? What is the membership? What is the largest and smallest membership the church has had?

Church History Questions Religious Ways Interview

1. When did you first begin attending this church?
2. Were you baptized in this church? Where did baptisms take place? What were the baptismal ceremonies like? Describe a baptism that you remember?
3. Were you married in the church? Describe the wedding ceremony. Are there any other weddings that are worthy of describing?
4. Does your church have a graveyard? How are funerals conducted? Does your church have wakes? Describe some funeral services and wakes of the past? Before funeral homes how were the bodies of the deceased prepared for burial?

5. Do you remember any particular preachers? Describe them? What were there sermons like? Where did they live? Have there ever been any preacher related scandals?

6. Has your church had revivals? Were there any tent or camp revivals? When were they held? Describe what they were like? Were many people saved? Who were some of the preachers that would preach? Any memorable testimonials? Did many people come from far away? Would entire families come?

7. What kind of music and hymns has your church played in the past? Who would play the piano or organ? Did your church ever have a gospel-singing group? Did they have a name? Did they sing anywhere else? Who was in it? Did singing groups come in from the outside? Who were some that you remember?

8. Do you have homecomings? Describe what they were like? How far away would people come from? What kind of food would you have? What else would be done?

9. What would the church do for Christmas? Would Christmas plays be performed? Would manger scenes be constructed? What was done for the children? Any special services? Describe.

10. What would the church do at Easter? Special services?

11. Has the church ever had any special festivals or celebrations?

12. Do you remember any stories concerning weather and church? Any blizzards or storms? Do you remember any disasters such as fire or flood where the church helped someone?

13. Have there ever been any disagreements amongst the congregation? What were they about? How were they settled?

14. Describe a typical Sunday morning when you were a child, from the time you got up in the morning until you went to bed? What would you wear to church? Was there Sunday school? Were there evening services? Would there be socializing after church? What would Sunday dinner be like? What was breakfast like?

15. Describe the happiest moment you ever had at church? The saddest moment? The greatest religious experience you ever had? Is there anything else you would like to share?

Transcriptions

Many oral history interviews never make it past the taping. The interview is the fun part, but the tape is practically useless without a transcript. Students know that they will not receive a grade without a transcript. This is an absolute requirement. I do not care who types the transcript. If the student's mother or brother will type it, that is just fine. The student has to do the interview and he is required to get the transcript completed. I do try and provide the tools to make typing a transcript as easy and painless as possible. We have two Dictaphones that the Rocky Gap Business Department has been kind enough to allow us to check out to students. These are the Cadillacs of transcribing. They allow the transcriber to stop, rewind, or fast-forward the tape with their foot. The only drawback is the cost. They run around \$150 to \$250. We provide a case so that they may be taken home.

A cheaper alternative is a foot pedal that can be used with the regular portable tape recorder. It will only stop or start the tape, but it still frees the hands of the students to type. It can be purchased for less than \$5 at Radio Shack or other electronic stores. We include this as standard equipment with our interview kits.

It is also required that the transcription be turned in on disk in a format that can be translated. This is also an absolute necessity. If you have the transcript on the computer then it can easily be used in a variety of ways.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/transcribing.html>

Narratives

Narratives are much easier to read and have more versatility in a published product. The student who can create a narrative form is the exception not the rule. The skills necessary are almost entirely language arts in nature. Grammar, spelling, and general writing skills are required. It also seems a creative bone is a desirable attribute. We like to break a narration into smaller components with a small heading that describes the main topic.

The average reader prefers a narration to a verbatim transcription for a number of reasons. It is easier to read. The reading is not broken by the constant question answer

format and a narration gives voice to the person whose story is being told. It is as if he is speaking directly to the reader without the interruption of interviewer. It seems to add meat to the interview. A narration in print and on the page is more pleasing to the eye for some reason.

To see an example of a student derived narration of an interview look at the interview choices below.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/narrative.html>

Release Forms

I am told these forms are very important. I am sure they are. You need to keep up with them and demand that a student turn on in or there will be no grade. Sometimes people do not want the interview to go on this world famous web site and that is ok. We tell them they can put whatever conditions they are comfortable with, i.e. not using it until after they die, not putting it on the web, etc. All kinds of sample forms are available on oral history web sites. This is the form we use. You may use it if you wish.

Bland County History Archives Release Form

I understand that this interview and or photos will be used by the Bland County History Archives at Rocky Gap High School for the purposes of preserving and promoting the history and the culture of the people of Bland County and I give my permission for such use.

Name:(print) _____

Signature: _____

Witness: _____

Conditions : _____

Date _____

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/forms.html>

Using Technology in the Content Area

Technology is an indispensable tool in nearly all phases of the Bland County History Archives. It is also a lure to bring students closer to their place and community. Too often technology is used in the abstract. What I mean by this is, that it is not used in any meaningful way and therefore has no real meaning. By using technology to produce real content, something meaningful is being done and technology is better mastered.

In this section the hardware and software that has been used to create and maintain the Bland County History Archives, as well as to publish its contents, will be featured. The technology that is employed to actually do the interviews is found in the equipment section of the interview area. Since technology changes so rapidly the descriptions will be general enough to be adaptable and yet specific enough to be useful.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/technology.html>

Computers

This project started with one computer. I have had as many as 15 students and only two computers. As you can imagine the ideal situation is to have one computer for each student. Now that we have acquired a few computers my acquisition philosophy is to buy one high-end computer as opposed to several cheaper ones. Your students will be engaged in tasks that range from word processing to video editing and so will be able to make use of a range of computers. Every computer does not have to be capable of editing video.

We have used Apple Computers from the very beginning and are very happy for a number of reasons. I have found them to be much more reliable, easier to maintain, easier to use, more versatile, and of course more fun. I am still using computers ranging from LCs, 5500s, 6100s, iMacs, and G4s. I still use Powerbook 1400s, an iBook, and a couple of G3 Powerbooks. Laptops are handy because of their versatility. Students can take them home or in the field to scan. A classroom workstation can also be quickly set up.

We work in a Wintel school system and have no problem with compatibility. Most of the students have PCs at home and there is no problem reading their word processing documents or graphic files. I believe students become more versatile by becoming familiar with both operating systems. They also end up preferring the Mac OS. You can do this project with PCs, it just won't be as much fun.

Scanners

I have 3 scanners and have just ordered another one. I do not know much about scanners. I know you should scan archival photos at 300 dpi or more. The three scanners I have are SCUSI. I have ordered a USB scanner because of their versatility and because my new computers are USB. I buy cheap scanners. Sometimes when a whole bunch of photos come in, I need several scanners, but two are usually all I have going at one time.

The scusi scanner to the right is daisy chained to a scusi external 10 GB hard drive because the Apple 5500 has a very small hard drive. The external HD is used as a backup scratch disk when we are scanning and also as storage for the photos.

I do send a scanner and a laptop out with students when they go into people's homes. Sometimes people are hesitant about sending their family photos to school with some kid. These are wise people. I would not blame them to be hesitant in entrusting them with me for that matter. I will talk about this in another section.

The USB scanner will be more versatile, because it can be hooked up to whatever computer is available. I would like to think somewhere there is a portable, rugged, inexpensive scanner that would be just right for this purpose. At the moment we are using the box a scanner came in to transport it. It has a handle and Styrofoam packing so it will work, but we will have to see how durable it will be.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/scanners.html>

Digital Cameras

We started with an Apple Quicktake digital camera not long after they came out, Later we purchased a Sony Mavica digital camera that uses floppy discs. I really like the Quicktake because of its size and ease of use, but it does not take the best pictures. However it is good to send out with the students when they do interviews. The Sony Mavica on the other hand, takes good pictures, but it is cumbersome to use and uses floppy discs. The discs are a plus and a minus. They are easy to use on a variety of computers, but hold few photos and often go bad.

I would like to have a smaller camera with an USB interface. What you need to think about is something rugged that students can use unsupervised in the field and then something more sophisticated for supervised use. The rugged one should also be cheap in case they break it or lose it. This has not happened, but it will. You have to let the hardware out and you have to trust the students. That is all there is to it. The more sophisticated camera, which is also the more expensive one, you should keep closer to home and within sight.

We try to take lots of pictures and we usually get a few good ones that way. You still need to know how to use a camera properly. We could use some training on that topic for sure.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/cameras.html>

Archival Storage and Backup

You cannot have too much storage. You must backup everything worth saving. I use external hard drives and CDs. I am also getting ready to write DVDs. This may be the answer to all the storage problems.

Photos especially need to back up. They will be anywhere from 1 MB to 20 MB in size. I keep all my photos on external hard drives and then permanently back them up on CDs. I am in the process of moving from scusi to firewire. I am now using the scusi for photo backup and the new firewire external hard drives for video. Video will devour your hard drive space. One good thing is that it is getting cheaper in price. The technology changes so fast you really have to pay attention. I have several SyQuest drives as witness to wrong choices along the way. We use zip drives for file transfer and temporary storage.

You should back everything you do as soon as possible. This does not always happen for a variety of reasons. However we have been very lucky in not losing more that we do through technology failure. Most of what we have lost has been through carelessness.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/storage.html>

Printers

We now use a network ink jet printer. We need a laser printer for all the transcripts that we print. The ink jet is best for photos. I do not know much about printers. I know that the more expensive printer is not necessarily the best, so do your research. Decide what

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you need to do with your printer and then think what you would like to do with your printer. Then decide how much you can spend. You might want to split the difference or you might want to go as cheaply as possible and hope on getting money in the future to get something more expensive. It will also be cheaper and better in the future.

We use Kodak photo grade paper for our photo prints. It works pretty well. A laser printer to print your transcripts would probably be great, but we do not have one. I also know that ink cartridges are very expensive.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/printers.html>

Web Site Creation

Creating your own web site is the cheapest, easiest, and most effective way to publish the content of your project. Our school system has its own server and it is the host for the Bland County History Archives. If your school does not have a server, and you cannot find a place to host your site for nothing, you will have to pay money. Start with your Internet service provider and then compare prices with other providers. You can do searches on the Internet to find these. It does not matter where they are located you can use your ftp program to send you web pages and update them. This may cost as little as \$5.00 a month.

A large extensive web site has to have someone in charge. A group of students or teachers can work on the site, but someone has to have final authority over content and style. Otherwise it will never get done or it will look awful. Website by committee is doomed to failure.

The key to success is simplicity of design and loads of content. Just because you can do something, does not mean you should do it. "A slow load is a no load", and "less is more", are some of the maxims we follow in class on a daily basis.

We use Adobe GoLive to create our web pages. We like it, however many people prefer Dreamweaver. We have no experience with it, but it is obviously a good program. In the beginning we use Adobe PageMill, which was great to begin on. It is very intuitive and simple and easy for students to learn. However if you are going to get serious you will need to upgrade to a more powerful piece of software.

We use the Anarchie ftp program. It is shareware and can be downloaded from the Internet. Photoshop is our graphics program of choice and it is bundled with ImageReady

that is absolutely essential for preparing photos for you web site. It removes unneeded pixels, which decreases load time tremendously.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/websitecreation.html>

Graphics Software

We use Adobe Photoshop for all our archival photo scanning. We scan at 300 dpi and save as a pdf or tiff document. We generally do not touch any of the photos up before we save them. That can always be done when the photo is used. It is better to scan too big than too small. Probably one of the scaled down versions of Photoshop would be just as good. We generally do not do anything to the photos until we use them. We save them the way we get them.

We also use Photoshop for our web work along with ImageReady, which optimizes the photos for the web. ImageReady is essential to prepare photos for inclusion on a web site. It reduces the number o pixels without too much of a reduction in quality.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/graphicssoftware.html>

Presentations

Presentations are an important part of this project. They enable us to take our story to conferences, community groups, etc. The ability to do presentations is an important component of building community support and networking with similar projects and sympathetic organizations.

We initially began by doing MS Power Point presentations. We tried to not do a generic looking slide show that looked like any other slide show on any other topic. The main way we did this was by not using any templates or clip art. We used text and photos and music. It was tricky to do, especially as the show became larger and more complex. The timings would not remain stable and would change. This was the biggest problem, but we worked around it. The audio was all burned on a CD, which PowerPoint would then point to at the appropriate time. The key to its effectiveness was the music and photos.

This year we began moving much of our computer presentations to iMovie 2. It was very easy to do, more effective, and more stable. We use excerpts from interviews, photos, and music in the introduction and conclusion to set the mood. PowerPoint is still used to

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explain the different areas of the projects. Students for the most part explain and demonstrate to the audience. To break this up we iMovie segments in between the different PowerPoint presentations. This keeps the audiences awake and engaged. Some of these are historical photos while others are photos of student activities, trips, etc.

Students really enjoy doing the presentations. They love to talk about their work, and they thrive on the positive feedback.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/presentation.html>

Audio and Video

This entire technology project feeds on the content that the place based oral history and local history program generate. If you have audio, and you have video, and you have photos, and you have documents, then you have everything Ken Burns has, right? Well, you get the picture. We are just beginning to stick our toes in the DVD technology waters and would not begin to pretend to know much about all this. Briefly we have learned the following in the last six months.

We have two DVD cameras. The Canon Z-10 DVD is very inexpensive. The Canon is much more expensive. They both use firewire to link to the Macs. We also have a Sony Media Converter that converts analog video to digital and digital to video. This can also be done through the cameras, but the Media Converter is more convenient. We also have two external fire wire hard drives. One is 40 GB and the other is 80 GB. Video uses an incredible amount of memory, so be prepared.

Apple's iMovie 2 is an incredible piece of software. It is easier to use than MS PowerPoint and does a pretty good job. You can only do so much with it, but we are very happy with the results and are ready to learn Final Cut Pro next year.

We thought the editing would be the hardest to learn and using the camera the easiest. So far it is the opposite. We will be seeking training in both these areas, but especially with the camera, we will update this next year and relate what we have learned.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/video.html>

Database Software

We use FileMaker Pro software for our database. Once again I am no expert on this subject however I have dabbled with other database software and I must say I like the intuitive feel of the FileMaker Pro interface. It is also made for the Mac OS and Wintel and seems to move back and forth pretty easily. It will import and export to all those Microsoft Office products which is probably important. Students are easily taught to put in data and also to make modifications.

It was also easy to put on a server. However you have to use a template to allow access from the Internet. If you want to customize the interface it will cost more money. We use an old Power Mac 5500 as a server for the database. It sits behind my desk in my classroom and is linked to the web site on the school board server. You have to check it periodically because if there is a thunderstorm or a power surge it will shut down or it might just shudder a little but that is enough to close the database.

I understand this a very powerful piece of software. We are barely scratching the surface of its potential. Perhaps we will be learning more in the future. The main thing for us is that it does what we want, it is easy to use, and it is stable.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/database.html>

Word Processing

We use both AppleWorks and MS Word. It is a Word world so we use it quite often. However I keep all the transcripts in AppleWorks. It does all that needs to be done, but Word has some advantages in the that you can look at all the misspellings and grammar mistakes in a transcripts at once and quickly decide what is really transcribed incorrectly and what is just what was spoken.

<http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/transportable/wordprocessing.html>

A Manual for Gathering Life Stories

Adapted for the

Yampa Valley Legacy Education Initiative

Yampa Valley Life Stories Project



From the manual developed by Megan Carney, Jo Carson and the Scrap Mettle SOUL company, with additional material from Julie Jones-Eddy, compiled by Community Performance, Inc.

GETTING STARTED

As story gatherers, you are ambassadors

- to your community from your school,
- to your school from your community, and
- from your community to others.

As ambassadors you will

- inform people about the story performance project,
- invite them to participate, and
- gather wonderful stories.

No small task.

This manual offers some techniques to help you do that and a format to follow, but feel free to adapt it to your own style. Take notes in the manual, make it your own.

Before you begin gathering stories, your group should:

1. **CHOOSE A THEME** – What kind of stories are you interested in gathering? Do you want your final production to have a specific theme, or do you want it to be a broader picture? Guidelines will help interviewers make the most out of each story they hear.
2. **BRAINSTORM QUESTIONS** – What kinds of questions need to be asked in order to elicit the kinds of stories that fit into your theme? What details might be important? What should interviewers keep their ears open for? How can sensitive subjects be broached? Prepared questions are good tools to take to an interview. But the best tools may be the questions that you make up on the spot as you carefully listen.
4. **WHERE TO LOOK FOR STORYTELLERS** – Think of the people you know who regularly tell stories (grandpa, the person who is the life of the party, the person who always makes her friends laugh). Older people. People with interesting jobs (teachers, guides, law officers, ministers, miners, ranchers). Survivors (of abuse, accidents, incarceration, war, being lost, diseases). Ask others for their suggestions.
5. **WHAT KIND OF STORIES TO LOOK FOR** – Hard stories are the richest. They are funny, sad, painful, and filled with wisdom. Trust will enable your teller to tell the hard stories. You earn that trust through active listening and STAR, explained on the next page

TOOLS FOR CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

S.T.A.R.: Sensitivity, Trust, Appreciation and Respect:

Presenting these qualities in yourself and encouraging them in your teller will help the teller to be more open with you and help you to get a better story. How can you do that? How can you help your teller to give you the best results?

ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Paraphrase when you need clarification.
2. Use open questions and closed questions (explained later) appropriately.
3. Focus on the teller, not on yourself.

PRACTICE

The more comfortable you are, the more comfortable your teller will be and the more likely to give you good stories. Practice on a friend or family member. Consider interviewing in a team to start if you are new to this. You and your partner could help each other out and make sure all the bases get covered.

SET UP YOUR SESSION

WITH AN INDIVIDUAL OR AN ORGANIZATION:

1. Ask if the individual or organization is familiar with your project. Tell them about it. Also, provide information that explains who your group is, what you are trying to do, and how gathering stories will help you to do that.

You might say: YVLEI Life Stories Project is the first step of a multi-generational, multi-community project that will develop original plays-with-music based on true stories gathered from the people of the Yampa Valley's four school districts—Hayden, Moffat, South Routt County, and Steamboat Springs. Then, selected stories will be turned into theatrical productions that will be presented in each of the communities and be performed by large casts of community members.

The purposes of the project are to bring our communities and schools closer to one another, and to pass on an appreciation for the culture and ecology of the place we live.

2. Tell ORGANIZATIONS that you are looking for people to share their stories in story circles of six to eight people. Indicate that you believe that their members have great stories that you would love to hear. Often people are unaware of the fascinating stories that they have lived. You may have to encourage them. A first story circle might begin with you sharing a story with them. One good story usually leads to another, and you're off and running with the tape on! Tell INDIVIDUALS that you are looking for people to share their stories. Let them know how glad you would be for the chance to talk to them for an hour. Often people are hesitant to talk with people about their lives, because they are worried that they are not very interesting. Assure them that you're not expecting them to give a dramatic presentation — you'd just like the chance to talk and listen.

3. If they are not interested, don't be offended. Remember, many of the people you will call are overworked. They are under no obligation to help you. Remain polite and move on. They may be able to help in the future or at least spread the word about what you are doing. Let them know how to contact you if they think of a possible source of stories.

Make sure you invite all of these people to the final production. Once they've seen the group in action on stage, they may want to be involved.

4. Thank them for helping you. A little good will goes a long way.

BEFORE YOU GO TO COLLECT STORIES

1. BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN YOUR PROJECT:

When you set up an interview, be clear with your teller about why you are gathering stories. Make sure the teller knows that you are searching for stories that can become part of a play. Reassure them that you will make every effort to honor the stories that are adapted into the play, and make sure that they are comfortable with the idea of stories from their life being dramatized. Also emphasize that not every story winds up in the play, but that bits, pieces, or inspirations from many do. Bring your teller an information packet on your project.

2. PROVIDE THE STORY IDEAS SHEET AHEAD OF TIME

Give the teller the story ideas letter (see appendix) at least a day before the interview. This will help the teller to understand what you want and to prepare for your interview. Another aid to storytelling is to read a good story to your teller before the interview, or, better yet, tell it in your own words, or tell one from your own life. Any of these will give your teller a sense of what is expected.

Do not refer to the interview as "gathering oral histories." This is formal and intimidating. You are not there for an entire life, only stories from it. Remember that it is a bit scary to be interviewed and you want to set your teller at ease in every way possible.

3. KNOW ALL YOU CAN ABOUT YOUR STORYTELLER

Prepare for your interview by asking the storyteller's family, friends, and colleagues to tell what they know about the storyteller, and suggest questions. If the teller has written or been written about, read that. Research, but don't let on how much you know. People get intimidated if they think someone knows more about a given incident than they do. Let your teller be the expert.

3. PREPARE QUESTIONS

Consider the type of organization or the experience of the individual while planning questions. Prepare a list of questions and keep them in front of you while interviewing. There are two basic types of questions, **opened**, and **closed**. You'll begin your interview with closed questions, like these (When were you born? Where did you go to elementary school?). Closed questions can be answered briefly. But most important are the open questions that call forth stories (What did you do for fun as a child? How did World War II impact your family? What incident stands out from your childhood on the ranch? What's the hardest thing you ever had to face?)

SAMPLE OPEN QUESTIONS

1. How did you get here?
2. How long does it take to be *from* here? (How does one get to be *from* here?)
3. Did your grandmother (or other relative) tell you stories about what it was like here when she was growing up?
4. Do you remember any old medicines that your mother (or other relative) made that didn't come from the drugstore or the doctor?
5. Do you remember any ghost stories?
6. Were you ever in a natural disaster (fire, flood)?
7. Who was your favorite/worst teacher/student, and why?
8. What is an experience you remember from school? childhood? the ranch?
9. Do you remember any old songs your mother (or other relative) sang to you? Please sing them for me.
10. What were some favorite family (work, church, school) activities?
11. What did you do for fun (playground games, dances, sporting events, etc.) as a teenager? child? in school?
12. What major event in your life taught you a lesson or became a turning point in your life?
13. When did you first travel away from home? Can you tell about that?
14. Tell me about hard times you faced.
15. Tell me about a highpoint of your life with your spouse/family.
16. What was a major disappointment in your life?
17. What do you hope for your children in light of your own experience?
18. Who is a person who most influenced your life, and how?
19. What are things in life from which you have derived the most satisfaction?
20. What was one of the saddest times in your life?
21. What's the hardest thing you ever had to face?
22. What's been the biggest surprise of your life?
23. What is the thing that you wish you had the opportunity to do in your life and for whatever reason never did?

HELPFUL HINTS TO KEEP IN MIND DURING THE INTERVIEW

1. Ask for detail. "Can you tell me more about that?" "Explain how that works."
2. Be careful not to interrupt. Write down your detail questions and ask them when your teller finishes the story.
3. Don't be afraid of silence in the interview. Out of silence comes the best material.
4. If the interview just isn't working out, don't let on. If you do, the person will feel like s/he failed you. Be positive and always find something to appreciate. The next second could hold riches.
5. If you feel like you're not getting any stories, tell one yourself to prime the pump.
6. Keep a blank tape handy if your storyteller wants to tell a story anonymously. Transcribe with changed names and erase the tape afterwards.

SAMPLE STORIES

Here are three short stories. You might read them over before the interview, then pick one and tell it in your own words. Tell one of these, or a story of your own, at the beginning of your interview or when you feel your subject needs a little help finding a story to tell. One story can call forth another.

From *Swamp Gravy*, in Colquitt, Georgia:

I remember when my daddy traded his mules for a tractor. He had to have the tractor, had to find someway to get more acres in crops, and a tractor could do that, but he had raised and trained those mules and they were good and he loved them, and I swear they loved him. And you had to have the cash down payment for a tractor or a trade in, and those boys that sold the equipment weren't dummies and they knew if they took a man's mules as a trade in, then he was going to have to come back to them for parts and service on his tractor, so they took mules. Sold them for slaughter, so they didn't make near what they gave on them, but they knew it was good business in the long run. Well, the day they delivered my dad's first tractor, he pointed them over to where the mules were standing and said "there's your mules", and he set out walking back across the farm. He couldn't watch, he knew what was going to happen to them, but he didn't see he had any other choice.

From *Scrap Mettle SOUL*, in Chicago:

I like to tell my grandkids about how their grandmother and I ran away together to get married. It was late at night when I picked her up from her father's farm. That man heard us and sicked his dog, Bob, on us. We ran across this muddy field with old Bob right on our heels. Every time he'd come up on us, my bride-to-be would say, "Good, Bob, go back home" and that old dog would turn around and head back. Then we'd hear her daddy yell, "Go on Bob, sick 'em, bring 'em home!" He'd be after us again. We finally got to my Model T. We rode off and got married. That poor old dog was mightily confused. I wasn't though. I knew exactly what I wanted to do - marry my love. When I finally sat in the same room with her daddy I told him I loved her and I would never leave her. He asked how I could be so sure. I told him I could feel it in my bones. We've been married 77 years.

From *Pieced Together* in Newport News, Virginia:

A farmer my husband worked for bought a hog from one of his neighbors, paid him what they both agreed was a fair price. And the farmer slaughtered and dressed the hog, and it weighed out at more than either of them thought it would. And when he sold it, he got more for it than he thought he would so he went back to the man he bought it from. Fellow saw him coming and he said, "We agreed that was a fair price." And the farmer said "I'm not here for more money." He said, "That hog dressed out for more than I expected, and I'm here to give more money for it." I told my brother about that farmer going back, my brother said "He may be a fool, but I admire that kind of fool."

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

1. **GET PERMISSION**, before you turn on the tape recorder. Use the Agreement (see appendix), explain it, and help your teller fill it out.
2. **TURN ON THE TAPE RECORDER**. Reset the counter to zero. Push record. State the name of the teller, the place of the interview, your name, and the date.
3. **LOG THE INTERVIEW**. Each time your teller makes a change of subject, note the counter number. Next to it provide a brief description, for example

000	Name, date, background on teller, John Q. Smith
126	His dog Johnny catches a skunk. (Good story)
253	His marriage to Juanita (mostly dates and facts, not much story)

4. **BEGIN QUESTIONS**. Start gradually, with the closed questions. Get name, occupation, age, birthplace, etc. Then move to the open questions. What you do in a day? How did you get here? Did you always want to be a ...? Then ease into your prepared questions on the theme. Don't be afraid to improvise as you get comfortable. Ask for specifics. "Tell me more about that..." Try not to interrupt when they are on a roll, but take notes and clarify when they pause.

5. **FOCUS ON THE STORY TELLER**. Remember Active Listening and STAR. Some people take longer than others to get to their story. Let your teller weave around if they need to, often this unearths really juicy details or background information or even leads to another story.

When the interview comes to an end, be sure to leave a number where they can reach you and encourage them to call if they remember any more details. Be prepared for a second session. It could be better than the first because they know you now and they're thinking in terms of stories.

IMPORTANT! Although the teller might offer you personal letters, newspaper clippings, etc., to help you with your story gathering, NEVER take anything of value from them. If you or someone in your group should lose them, it would be devastating to the teller and violate the trust they have placed in you. Take them with you if you go need to xerox or photograph their material.

6. **INVITE THEM INTO YOUR PROJECT**. Everyone should be invited to join the performance itself. As you are ending the interview, tell about upcoming activities and how your storyteller might be involved. Because s/he has shared stories with you, the teller is already part of your project. Communicate that welcome and warmth to them before you leave.

7. **THANK THE TELLER**. They have taken a great risk in sharing their treasured stories with you. Honor that when you thank them.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

PACKAGE YOUR FINDINGS

Label the cassette with

1. your name,
2. date of interview,
3. teller's name,

Label the cassette box with this same information, plus

1. age,
2. occupation,
3. address,
4. phone number

3. Also on the tape log, summarize what is on the tape. Did you get a story that seemed especially great to you? If so, now is the time to document that. Sell your story to the rest of the story gathering team.

What kinds of stories did the teller share with you?

1. Did a theme emerge?
2. Did one specific story strike you as particularly dramatic?
3. What are the major "plot" details of it?
4. How old is the teller in the story and where and when does it take place?
5. Who are the other characters?
6. Briefly, describe what happens.
7. Did the teller learn something important, sad, funny, etc.?
8. Include any other information that will be useful to the group when you are deciding what stories to put in the play.

4. Package it all

1. Put tape log/summary together with
2. Story release form
3. Wrap them around the tape
4. Turn this in at the next meeting of story gatherers.

APPENDIX

1. Story ideas letter to send to prospective story tellers
2. Story release form (xerox for each interview)
3. Tape log and summary (xerox for each interview)

Hi Storyteller,

A community grows strong as it hears and passes on the stories of its place and its people.

You may know you are a storyteller, or you may wonder why on earth we're talking to you. If you're in the latter category, this note is for you.

What's a story? "The king died, and then the queen died," is fact, not story. But when you say "The king died, and the queen died of grief," that's a story. A story tells why and how.

If you're not sure what a story is, think of what you wanted to hear when you asked your momma "Tell me a bedtime story about when you were a little girl."

Here are a couple of ideas that may help you remember:

1. Stories you've heard. When you were a child did someone in your family, or someone close to you, tell stories? They might have been adventure stories about life in the old place when your grandpa was your age, or about something funny that happened in your family, or about a tragedy in your family or town.

2. Stories that happened to you. An adventure. Funny, painful, life changing, what are the events that shaped you? Those are stories, share them. What was the most painful thing that ever happened to you? What was the very best thing? Stories could be about:

1. losing someone,
2. an adventure at school,
3. the hardest thing you ever had to face,
4. the most amazing thing that ever happened to you.

Speak from your heart. Tell the hard truths. Our time on earth is short. So much of what we say is just being nice. Our pain, our love, our hopes, our dreams, our great disappointments and our little triumphs we tend to hide from one another. This interview is your chance to share deeply. Weigh your natural desire for silence against the gift of your story. Imagine that when you give this interview, you are talking to the future, to the people of tomorrow. What would you want them to hear?

Your stories lights a candle that helps all of us to see.

I look forward to seeing you on this date _____ at this time _____,

in this place _____.

Sincerely,

Yampa Valley Legacy Education Initiative
Life Stories Project Agreement

As a gift to my community, I, _____,
hereby grant permission for the recording of my voice, physical likeness, and/or printed stories for
use in this project and any other YVLEI publication. I hereby grant YVLEI all rights to this
material. I understand that my story may be dramatized as part of a future YVLEI theatrical
production. I understand that the transcripts of stories will be archived and preserved.

I also waive my rights and causes of action which I may have under the laws of copyright,
privacy, libel and slander, and other legal actions which arise from the use of said tapes against
YVLEI or its agents, and I agree to hold harmless YVLEI or its agent from any legal actions
which may be the result of the said use of my voice record or video and/or audio tapes for
educational and entertainment purposes.

This agreement is binding on my heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns.

Narrator: _____

Address:

Name:

Date of Agreement:

Phone Number: ()

Interviewer: _____

Address:

Name:

Date of interview:

Yampa Valley Life Stories Project
Tape Interview Data Sheet

General topic of interview: _____

Date: _____ Place: _____

Length: _____ Speed: _____ Side(s) 1 _____ 2 _____

Narrator:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Occupation: _____

Interviewer(s): _____

Tape Counter	Subjects covered, spell names of persons or places

Assignment Checklist

Check your assignments for the following points:

1. Did you identify the problem or situation and present the characters and the setting at the beginning of your story?
2. Did you write a beginning that is likely to interest your reader?
3. Did you present the actions of the story in chronological order?
4. Did you place each group of related actions in a separate paragraph?
5. Did you include dialogue where it is appropriate?
6. Did you include a high point in the action?
7. Did you settle the situation or problem by the end of the story?
8. Did you proofread your story for correct grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation?

Scoring Rubric for Narratives

Score 1 **Minimal Evidence of Achievement** (below 70%, F)

The response is a sketchy, undeveloped story or a loose collection of incidents. The setting is likely to be absent; characters are not developed or named; conflict is not included; and a context has not been established. No sense of pacing is evident. Dialogue, if used, is extremely simplistic.

Score 2 **Limited Evidence of Achievement** (D, 70 - 76%)

The response is an undeveloped story. The setting is likely to be absent; characters may be named but not developed; and details are lacking. There may be an attempt to use conflict, but it is vague and undefined. There is no sense of pacing.

Score 3 **Some Evidence of Achievement** (C, 77 - 85%)

The writer may introduce the basic narrative elements of setting, character, and conflict, but one of these is likely to be missing. Characters tend to be stereotypic, not well developed, and lacking in motivation for their actions. Relationships among characters are vague. There may be shifts in point of view and problems with pacing.

Score 4 **Adequate Achievement** (B, 86 - 93%)

The writer places the action of the story in a meaningful context. The elements of setting, character, and conflict are somewhat developed. Characters are well developed, believable, and motivated. A single point of view is maintained throughout the story with only brief lapses. Dialogue is usually present but not used as effectively as in papers at the higher achievement levels.

Score 5 **Commendable Achievement** (A, 94 - 100%)

The action of the story is placed in a meaningful context. The elements of setting, character, and conflict are firmly established. Characters are well developed through the use of several strategies. Dialogue is used effectively and integrated into the flow of the story. Sensory details help readers visualize the story.

Score 6 **Exceptional Achievement** (A+, above 100%)

The response represents a compelling and engaging story that captures the interest of the reader. Setting, character, and conflict are firmly established. Characters are well developed, more complex, and less stereotypic than those found in responses at lower achievement levels. The writer uses a variety of strategies to develop characters. A single point of view is established and maintained throughout the story. Pacing is skillfully controlled.

This unit will meet the following standards:

Standard 2 - Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 3 - Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Presentation Rubric

A - The presentation is wonderful! It achieves its intended purpose with its audience and presents information accurately. The presentation has a central theme that come out clearly and accurately through the story line, the business of each actor and actress, the costumes, props, music, and sound effects. Dialogue is used to support the development of the characters and the presentation of the information. The presentation was rehearsed sufficiently to allow the actors and actress to be competent. Overall, the skit is highly entertaining to its intended audience.

B - The presentation is like one receiving the rating of A, except some important element (i.e. setting, characterization, plot, etc.) is not excellent.

C - The presentation is like one receiving the rating of B, except some important element is average.

D - The presentation seems "thrown together." Its theme is unclear and /or developed inaccurately or poorly. Some actors and actresses have seemingly unimportant parts and/or are not very "into" their characters. The story line is weak and unimaginative. Props, costumes, music, and/or sound effects are not used or may even be a distraction. It appears that little thought or rehearsal went into the narrative.

F - The presentation is very poorly done.

PERFORMANCE TASK ASSESSMENT LIST

Performance Elements	Points Possible	Student Assessment	Teacher Assessment
1. The central theme of the presentation gives a story line based on a local character.	5		
2. The information is presented accurately.	5		
3. The actors and actresses have parts important to conveying the story line.	5		
4. The story line of the presentation is interesting and helps to present the information accurately.	5		
5. The actions of each actor work well to help convey the information accurately.	5		
6. Props and/or costumes are chosen well to support the characters and to enhance the presentation of the information.	5		
7. Music, sound effects, visual aides and other creative devices support the story line and also help to present the information.	5		
8. Dialogue supports the development of the characters, the story line, and the presentation of the information.	5		
9. The presentation was rehearsed sufficiently.	5		
10. The audience could easily hear and see the presentation.	5		
11 The presentation is entertaining to the audience.	5		
Total	55		

IV. Oral and Community History in K-12 Schools: An Annotated Bibliography

by Elisabeth Higgins Null

ORAL AND COMMUNITY HISTORY: GENERAL SOURCES

Bartis, Peter. *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques*. Washington, D.C.: American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 1990.

A concise, practical guide to fieldwork procedures useful to oral historians may be found online at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwk.html>. It is also available in print from the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540, 202/707-5510, (email: folklife@loc.gov). Single copies are free, but postage must be paid on bulk orders.

Baum, Willa K. *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*. Walnut Creek, CA.: AltaMira Press, 1987.

A classic guide to all aspects of starting a community-based oral history project. Order online at www.altamirapress.com or by calling (1-800) 462-6420.

Baum, Willa K. "Tips For Oral History Interviewers." Web Page: [www.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/rohotips.html)

[ROHO/rohotips.html](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/rohotips.html). This list of pointers deals with the human aspects of oral history interviewing. Although this website provides no direct links to Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office, viewers may go to the URL and scroll back to ROHO/. This will connect them to rich bibliographic and technical information, including Carol Hicke's "One Minute Guide to Oral Histories," a convenient checklist or refresher.

Baum, Willa K. *Transcribing and Editing Oral History*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1991.

An emphasis on the post-interview process. Order online at www.altamirapress.com or by calling (1-800) 462-6420.

Baylor University Institute for Oral History. "Oral History Workshop on the Web." Web Page: www.baylor.edu/Oral_History/Introduction.html. Concise online guide covers the basics in just a few screens.

Brecher, Jeremy. *History From Below: How to Uncover and Tell the Story of Your Community, Association, or Union*. West Cornwall, CT: Commonwork/Advocate Press, 1996. This brief, simple manual is geared to readers exploring the history of their workplace, union, local organization, or town. Brecher talks about designing projects within the constraints of limited time and resources.

Howarth, Ken. *Oral History: A Handbook*. Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton Publishing, 1998.

The author explains oral history recording and all of its uses. Practical expository sections are combined with case studies. There is a section on oral history in the classroom. Copies are available through online bookstores.

Bibliography *continued*

Ives, Edward D. *The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Fieldworkers in Folklore and Oral History*. Knoxville, TN.: University of Tennessee Press, 1995.

Ives' insights are gained from years of experience as a folklorist, oral historian, and writer. Highly readable.

Jackson, Bruce. *Fieldwork*. Urbana, IL.: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

A comprehensive, practical oral history guide with useful material on video techniques.

Kammen, Carol and Norma Prendergast. *Encyclopedia of Local History*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2000.

This timely and multi-cultural guide to all aspects of documenting local history includes signed essays on a variety of topics, along with advice for making use of evidence ranging from government records to almanacs. The Internet, as a research and presentation tool, is integrated with other resources. Order online at www.altamirapress.com or by calling (1-800) 462-6420.

Kyvig, David E. and Myron A. Marty. *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*. Nashville, TN.: American Association for State and Local History, 2000.

Up-to-date, practical guide to doing history at the community level. This book offers help in making use of published and unpublished records, material artifacts, and visual evidence. Suggestions for how to connect local topics with broader historical issues. Order online at www.altamirapress.com or by calling (1-800) 462-6420

Library of Congress, American Folklife Center. Web Page: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/folklife/>.

A guide to all collections at the American Folklife center, including those mounted online through the Library's American Memory Project. There is also information about the Veterans History Project, publications, and ethnographic resources throughout the United States and elsewhere. Of special interest to educators doing oral and community history projects is "Explore Your Community" a poster produced in conjunction with the Rural School and Community Trust encouraging students to learn more about their own communities by engaging in cultural documentation projects. The poster, which is free by calling the Rural Trust at (202) 955-7177, contains many suggestions and tips on doing heritage studies at the community level. The lesson plans on the back of the poster are also available online at this site.

Mercier, Laurie and Madeline Buckendorf. *Using Oral History in Community History Projects*. Carlisle, PA.: Oral History Association, 1992.

A step-by-step guide to planning, organizing, and undertaking oral history projects in community settings. The authors anticipate common problems and offer case studies of successful community oral history projects. Order by sending an order form to: Oral History Association Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013. Order form available online at <http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/Publications.html>, by calling (717) 245-1036, or e-mailing: OHA@dickinson.edu.

Oral History Association. Oral History Evaluation Guidelines. Carlisle, PA.: Oral History Association, 1991.

These guidelines have been adopted by the National Endowment for the Humanities as the standard for conducting oral history. Order by sending an order form to: Oral History Association Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013; by calling (717) 245-1036; or e-mailing: OHA@dickinson.edu. Order form available online at <http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/Publications.html>. Also available free on the Oral History Association's website.

Oral History Review. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973-.

A major American journal devoted to all aspects of oral history. Published biannually. Oral History Review 25 (Spring/Fall 1998) was a special issue devoted to oral history in the classroom. For further information, visit the OHA website: <http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/> or phone: (717) 245-1036.

Ritchie, Donald A. Doing Oral History (Twayne's Oral History, No. 15). New York: Simon Schuster Macmillan, 1995.

A practical, comprehensive guide (in question-and-answer format) to all aspects of the oral history process. Includes timely advice on raising funds, observing legal limits and using oral histories in museums, on radio, in therapy, and in interactive video. There are sections on teaching oral history.

Schorzman, Terri A. ed. A Practical Introduction to Videohistory: The Smithsonian Institution and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Experiment. Melbourne, FL: Krieger Publishing Co., 1993.

A technical, but comprehensive guide to video documentation and oral history. Orders: Krieger Publishing Company, PO Box 9542, Melbourne, FL 32902-9542 Phone: (321) 724-9542.

Sunstein, Bonnie and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research. New York and Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

This workbook guide to fieldwork and interviewing technique is filled with exercises and short essays from student, popular, and academic writers. Geared to college undergraduates, it is full of ideas and materials suitable for oral history at any level. A companion web site is being developed at www.fieldworking.com/home.html

Truesdale, Barbara. "Oral History Techniques: How to Organize and Conduct Oral History Interviews." Web Page: www.indiana.edu/~ohrc/pamph1.htm.

Less of a guide than a few well-chosen words of advice, this online pamphlet is a useful introduction to oral history interviewing. From the same page, one can link to many other resources at Indiana University's Oral History Research Center.

Utah State University. Oral History Program web page: www.usu.edu/oralhist/oh.html.

This academic program is run by the Department of Theatre Arts and offers a performance-centered perspective on oral history. David Sidwell, its director, offers various short essays: "The

Bibliography *continued*

Significance of Oral History," "How To Collect Oral Histories," "Telling Effective Life Stories," "Telling Stories From Our Lives," and "Making a Life-Map" (with illustrated examples). There is also a "Performance Event script for the Classroom," which provides a generic script for students and teachers to adapt to local circumstances when creating a play from oral history materials. For anyone interested in history as story, this is a useful jumping-off point.

Yow, Valerie Raleigh. *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists*. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage Publications, 1994.

The author combines training in psychology with her work in oral history, and is particularly knowledgeable about in-depth interviews

RESOURCES ESPECIALLY FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Association of Oral History Educators web page: www.geocities.com/AOHELanman/.

This website offers a range of publications, information, and services to those seeking to teach oral history in K-12 schools. Members of AOHE receive a newsletter, "The Oral History Educator." For further information, contact Barry Lanman, President, The Association of oral History Educators, P.O. Box 24, Ellicott City, MD 21041, or e-mail: AOHELanman@aol.com

Bartis, Peter and Paddy Bowman. "A Teacher's Guide to Folklife Resources for K-12 Classrooms." Web page: www.loc.gov/folklife/teachers.html.

Lists printed materials, videos, state-by-state folk arts agencies and other materials suitable for school use. The focus is upon folklore, but there are many items of interest to teachers of oral history as well. Some of the items are inaccessible, but other items appear here that are unlikely to be found elsewhere.

Bowman, Paddy, Sylvia Bienvenu, and Maida Owens. "Louisiana Voices: An Educators Guide to Exploring Our Communities and Our Traditions." Web page: www.louisianavoices.org/.

This site provides a detailed, lesson-plan by lesson-plan means of studying traditional Louisiana culture and is aligned with Louisiana Education Content Standards. Materials are intended for both 4th and 8th graders, but can be adapted for all ages. Study Unit II is of particular interest to teachers contemplating oral history projects.

Brown, Cynthia Stokes. *Connecting With the Past: History Workshop in Middle and High Schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishing, 1994.

Oral history is integrated into a history workshop model along with the use and analysis of artifacts, visual images, and local documents. Help is provided for teachers in evaluating, discussing, and making use of primary resources.

Brown, Cynthia Stokes. *Like It Was: A Complete Guide to Writing Oral History*. New York: Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 1988.

A practical guide on all aspects of the oral history process, with an emphasis on the writing of short pieces and biographies from oral history sources. A special section on doing oral history in the classroom.

Center for History and New Media (George Mason University, Va. and American Social History Project Center for Media and Learning, City University of New York). "History Matters." Web page: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/>. A gateway to web resources for American history teachers at the school and college levels. Filled with teaching tips, guides to analyzing primary source evidence, exercises for utilizing online collections from the Library of Congress and other public and private resources, discussions with major historians, syllabi, a reference desk for the use of electronic materials, and links to a variety of sites specializing in American history.

Davis, Shari and Benny Ferdman. *Nourishing the Heart: A Guide to Intergenerational Arts Projects in the Schools*. New York: City Lore, 1993.

Filled with ideas for multigenerational programs. Available through City Lore's Culture Catalog online (www.citylore.org), by e-mail (hkazama@citylore.org), or by phone: (212) 529-1955 or (1-800) 333-5982.

Dean, Pamela Toby Despit and Petra Munro. *Talking Gumbo: A Teacher's Guide for Using Oral History in the Classroom*. Baton Rouge, LA: T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, Louisiana State University, 1998.

This oral history manual for secondary school teachers and their classes accompanies a 30-minute video "You've Got to Hear This Story," on how to do oral history interviews. The video features students as interviewers. Manual and video are available from the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History at Louisiana State University. Contact director Mary Hebert by e-mail at mheber1@lsu.edu or call (225) 578-6577.

Dresser, Norine. *Multicultural Celebrations*. New York: Random House, 1999.

Helpful for teachers and students interested in how various community members celebrate. The author offers information on deportment, custom, and background which should aid those working outside their own ethnic background.

Flynn, Robert and Susan Russell. *When I Was Just Your Age*. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1992.

The oral histories of 13 elders from a variety of occupational and ethnic backgrounds are combined here with a guide to doing oral history and a series of activities for the classroom. Each life reflects not only the life and times of the early 20th century but a "mindscape" of prevalent values and attitudes. Written for readers of all ages.

The Foxfire Fund, Inc. *The Active Learner* (1996-).

Articles in this journal feature experiential and place-based educational examples, frequently having an oral or local history component. Published three times a year. Available from The Foxfire Fund, Inc., P. O. Box 541, Mountain City, GA 30562-0541. Phone: (706) 746-5828.

Gillis, Candace. *The Community as Classroom: Integrating School and Community through Language Arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook Heinemann, 1991.

Intergenerational exchanges between students and their elders can enhance community studies

Bibliography *continued*

and can also help young people gain insights into the aging process. In working through stereotypes about senior citizens, students learn to see beneath the myths and stereotypes surrounding them in their daily lives.

Lanman, Barry A. and George L. Mehaflly. *Oral History In the Secondary School Classroom*. Association of Oral History Educators, 1988.

This pamphlet describes oral history initiatives at schools from the Aleutian Islands to Baltimore, and thoroughly details how to set up all facets of such a project. The authors see oral history as well suited for "writing across the curriculum." They also offer guidance for students in all aspects of the interview process and provide forms, questionnaires, ethical and legal guidelines, and a bibliography. This work is out of print but may still be ordered through the Association of Oral History Educators, P.O. Box 24, Ellicott City, MD 21041; www.geocities.com/AOHELanman/; or AOHELanman@aol.com.

Library of Congress. "American Memory Learning Page." Web page: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/>.

A useful portal into the enormous repository of photographs, texts, speeches, diaries, maps, art works, ephemera, recordings, and films from the Library's collections. Among these resources are many oral history collections and primary sources students can use to discover their regions.

Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, Veterans History Project Web page:

www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/youthpartner.html. 2002.

Through a youth partnership, middle school and high school students can participate in interviewing and recording war veterans. By following the project's guidelines, students and their teachers will learn oral history methods and systematic procedures. If they submit their fieldwork to the American Folklife Center or to another participating archive, their efforts will become part of a national endeavor to conserve important stories of a disappearing generation. All necessary information is available at this site.

Matthews-DeNatale, Gail and Don Patterson. *Learning From Your Community: Folklore and Video in the Schools*. Columbia, SC: McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, 1991. Aimed at students and teachers, grades 4-8, this sequenced group of lessons guides students through the steps of making a video as a means of recording personal and community experience. Available from the Culture Catalogue, phone: (212) 529-1955 or (1-800) 333-5982. May also be purchased through the McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC 29208

National Endowment for the Humanities. "My History Is America's History." Web page:

www.myhistory.org/.

Directed at children who wish to discover their own roots and link their families' pasts to the history of America. The emphasis is two-fold: encouraging the young to collect and tell stories and linking those stories to larger stories about the nation. The website provides many historical links and topics and has enough changing features to be a continual source of interest. A related educational site can be found at <http://edsitement.neh.gov/>.

National Network for Folkarts in Education. C.A.R.T.S (Cultural Arts Resources for Teachers and Students) web page: www.carts.org/.

Important informational clearinghouse for place-based educators with a strong emphasis on folklore and heritage collecting projects. Of particular interest is the "Culture Catalog," available for free online or by e-mail (carts@citylore.org), which carries a wide range of multicultural resource books and teaching aids. This catalog is produced by CityLore, a New York City folk arts center whose work is linked to and featured through this site. An area called "Resources" lists folk arts and folklife education resources of special interest to K-12 educators and students. It also contains many articles, some theoretical and some methodological. E-mail and discussion lists are active, and there are notices of training workshops across the country.

Organization of American Historians. *Magazine of History: For Teachers of History* 11.3 (1997).

This entire issue deals with teaching oral history in school. Many of the most experienced teachers in the field have articles here, and some share challenges and insights in a roundtable discussion. Most articles appear as "pdf" files. Download at [www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/oral history/](http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/oralhistory/). Several other issues, most devoted to a particular topic, can also be downloaded.

Rogovin, Paula. *Classroom Interviews: A World of Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishing, 1998.

An experienced first-grade teacher shows how young students can master and utilize interviewing skills and how interviewing itself can drive the curriculum in social studies, writing, reading, science, and math. Heinemann Publishing also offers a 45-minute video of Rogovin's students, "Classroom Interviews in Action," showing how her students research and set in context what they have learned through interviewing.

Simons, Elizabeth Radin. *Student Worlds, Student Words: Teaching Writing Through Folklore*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1990.

Guide to teaching writing through folklore, complete with detailed lesson plans. Helps students to see themselves as informants with their own rich troves of tradition. Topics range from games and play to graffiti to family folklore. For teachers of all grade levels.

Sorin, Gretchen Sullivan. *Present Meets Past: A Guide to Exploring Community History*. Vol. I: *All About Me*; Vol. II: *The Place Where I Live*. Cooperstown, NY: New York State Historical Association, 1988. In these two volumes addressed directly to students, each illustrated chapter includes a teacher's guide and background information on how to get started researching personal history. Vol. I contains background information, a teacher's guide, activities, follow-ups and an extensive bibliography. Vol. II has many illustrations with project activities, follow-ups and a bibliography to direct learning about community and neighborhood. Order from Farmers Museum, Lake Road, Cooperstown, NY 13326. Phone: (607) 547-1494. Website: www.farmersmuseum.org/shop.htm.

Bibliography *continued*

Wigginton, Eliot. *Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985.

This is a classic account of how a teacher motivated his rural students to write, research, and involve themselves in their Appalachian community. Through chronicling its oral history and folkways, his students soon achieved a level of competence known to anyone who reads the ongoing series of Foxfire books. Available from The Foxfire Fund, Inc., P. O. Box 541, Mountain City, GA 30562-0541 or by calling: (706) 746-5828. Wigginton's memoir is out of print, but can usually be obtained through libraries.

Wood, Linda P. *Oral History Projects in Your Classroom*. Carlisle, Pa.: Oral History Association, 2001.

This guide is in a punched-hole notebook format, available with or without a binder. Filled with curriculum and discussion ideas, it utilizes examples from oral history projects in schools throughout the United States. Sample forms and handouts are included. It is one of the Oral History Association's pamphlet series. Order by sending an order form to: Oral History Association Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013; by calling (717) 245-1036; or e-mailing: OHA@dickinson.edu. Order form available online at <http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/Publications.html>.

SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS ONLINE

Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, Edcouch-Elsa High School, TX. Llano Grande Journal web page: www.llanogrande.org/publications/home.html.

These three volumes of oral history by students documenting their South Texas community illuminate a local history of migration, hard work, and strong families embedded in the oral traditions of area residents. The students' efforts have earned them regional and national attention, leading them to develop more place-based initiatives, such as film documentation and radio broadcasting.

Montana Heritage Project web page: www.edheritage.org/index.htm.

A densely-packed website of student work in oral history, resource guides, and teacher and student reflections on place-based education. The Montana Heritage Project is a statewide effort to engage young people in oral history and place-based education.

Mooreville High School, IN. "We Made Do - Recalling the Great Depression" web page: www.msc.k12.in.us/mhs/social/madedo/, 2002.

Supplementing local interviews with solicited e-mail narratives, this website contains transcribed oral interviews, a description of the school project, and some reflective thinking about the project.

Niskayuna High School, NY. "FDR Cartoon Archive" web page: www.nisk.k12.ny.us/fdr/index.html.

This upstate New York high school project is ongoing. Scanned images from a cartoon collection at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Museum in Hyde Park are grouped into various aspects of Roosevelt's political career. Each cartoon also appears in a database with a short, student-

written essay. No oral or community history is involved, per se, but the project exemplifies the kind of analysis students are capable of bringing to visual artifacts.

Pasco High School, WA. "Early Life In Our Area and Veterans' Accounts; Pasco Area's Immigrants' Stories" web page: <http://users.owt.com/rpeto/stu.html>.

This is a collection of interviews and web pages about the Pasco locale, Washington. Each student has conducted his or her own interview and constructed an individual web page. In most cases, students have added their own reflections on their project. This web page gives one a good idea of what students actually can do and accomplish on their own with minimal polishing by adult collaborators.

Richfield High School, UT. "Always Lend A Helping Hand: Sevier County Remembers the Great Depression" web page: <http://newdeal.feri.org/sevier/about/links.htm>.

This Utah high school website integrates intensive use of online state and federal government photographs as well as other primary sources of information with their own oral history interviews of senior citizens. Transcribed interviews, photographs, and contextual essays are presented within a tight organizational structure.

Rocky Gap High School, VA. "Bland County History Archives" web page:

<http://bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/gap.html>.

This nationally-recognized project began in 1993 as a course in the collecting and archiving of local documents and the introduction of oral history components. Each year, new students build on the efforts of previous students, integrating new technology as the need arises. The result is a massive collection of materials online, as well as in a school-based archive. One recent addition is an online "primer" of how the project developed, what its challenges were to teachers and students, and what technology has proved most beneficial.

San Mateo Middle College High School, CA. "Vietnam: The Never Ending War" web page:

<http://pages.prodigy.net/meng25/mchs/>.

These California students interviewed relatives and community members who had some connection with the Vietnam War. They then wrote up these interviews in the style of Studs Terkel: distilling the information but conveying it from the point of view of the informant. They also wrote essays about the lingering effects of the war and its influence on American culture.

South Kingstown High School, RI. "What Did You Do In The War Grandma?" web page:

www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html. This is an oral history of Rhode Island Women in World War II written by students in an honors English class during the late 1980s. Later, it was digitized in conjunction with Brown University's Scholarly Technology Group. One complete interview can be listened to in audio. Students write about their informants from the transcripts they made. Several essays are online including one by Linda Wood, the oral historian who worked with the students.

Bibliography *continued*

South Kingstown High School, RI. "The Whole World Was Watching: An Oral History of 1968" web page: www.stg.brown.edu/projects/1968/.

Sophisticated presentation of an oral history collection in which each informant's interview is transcribed, made available in real audio recording, and accompanied by a carefully annotated log. A timeline and glossary are included, as are several essays and notes by teachers and consultants. The project was digitized in conjunction with Brown University's Scholarly Technology Group.

St. Andrew's Episcopal School, MD. "Doing Oral History: An Oral History Project of the American Century for the 21st Century" web page: www.doingorallhistory.org/. This website describes the purposes and objectives of teacher Glen Whitman in the oral history courses he teaches. Students conduct and transcribe interviews, perform additional historical research, and present their work at such events as an "oral history coffeehouse." Many students make use of their location near the nation's capital and interview decision-makers or those able to exercise considerable political power. Included is his article from *The History Teacher* (August 1998), "Teaching Students How To Be Historians: An Oral History Project For The Secondary School Classroom."

Wakefield, Laura and Joy Penney. "Living History" web page: www.nms.osceola.k12.fl.us/American%20Memories/AM_LIVING_HISTORY.html. 2002.

An interesting website because, along with student projects in oral history, it shows how teachers integrated the materials from the Library of Congress's American Memory collection into many aspects of oral history-related activities. A real-life demonstration of how a project develops.

What Kids Can Do. "Tell Us How It Was: Students Interview Their Elders" web page: www.whatkids-cando.org/intro.html.

Excerpts from four web-based oral history project interviews have been reformatted for this website, which features articles and examples of "powerful learning for public purpose" by students throughout the United States. The oral histories come from high schools in Rhode Island, the Rio Grande valley of Texas, Illinois, and southwest Virginia. Edited interviews are accompanied by short descriptions of each project.

FOR FURTHER READING:

Dunaway, David K. and Willa K. Baum. *Oral History; An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Walnut Creek, CA.: AltaMira Press, 1996.

Key scholarly essays on oral history with bibliographies following each chapter. Together, these provide a guide to major writings and trends in oral history to 1996. For adults and advanced students. Order online at www.altamirapress.com or by calling (1-800) 462-6420.

Grele, Ronald J. *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*. New York: Praeger, 1991.

Theoretical work stressing the dynamic and interactive nature of oral history interviewing. The structure of the interviewing process is analyzed with attention given to the nature of narrative and conversational practice, historical imagination, and social context.

Portelli, Alessandro and Charles Hardy III. "I Can Almost See the Lights of Home—A Field Trip to Harlan County Kentucky." *The Journal for MultiMedia History*, Vol. II (1999).

An aural essay based on the interchange between an American and an Italian oral historian. The dialogue between interviewer and interviewee persists throughout the succeeding interpretive and scholarly processes. This essay instructs the listener in sound authorship even as it urges oral historians to pay more attention to the "orality" of oral sources.

Ryden, Kent. *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place*. Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1993.

An interdisciplinary approach to landscape analysis. Ryden argues that landscape, as it exists in the minds of those who live in it, is influenced by the stories we associate with it and the narratives by which we situate ourselves in its midst. A sense of place is thus key to the ways a culture shapes its identity. The author moves between examining the environment and exploring its representation in folklore and literature.

Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Contemplative book which combines the historical development of oral history with reflective discussions on where oral history fits into the larger scope of historiography and how oral information should be evaluated and appraised. This latest edition adds new material on narrative and current technology to a broad scope of topics ranging from memory and the self to drama as therapy.

V. Contact and Sales Information

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Voices of the Valley, Volumes I, II, & III are for sale now, and Volume IV will be on sale in June 2002. Price for Book and Audio Compact Disc Set is \$15.00 each, plus \$4.00 shipping. The \$4.00 charge is for the shipping of three or fewer volumes. Make check or money order payable to AVUSD and send to Mitch Mendosa.

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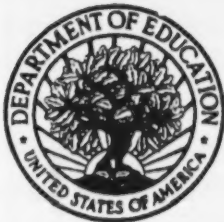
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